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THE LIFE

OF

HENRY THE FOURTH,

KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.

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"THE LIFE AND TIMES OF LOUIS THE FOURTEENTH,"

"THE HISTORY OF CHARLEMAGNE,"

"THE LIFE OF EDWARD THE BLACK PRINCE,"

&c. &c.

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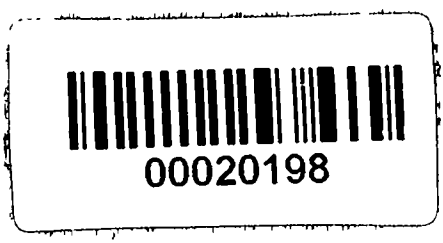
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PREFACE.

THE name, the character, and the general history of Henry the Fourth of France are so well known to all readers that very few words of introduction may be necessary to the following work. That part of his life, with the details of which the world is, I believe, most fully acquainted, is the portion which succeeded to his accession to the throne. Occupying a prominent position in Europe, affecting the interests and even the fate of neighboring states, alternately the object of anxiety, of dread, and of expectation to other rulers, his actions were then observed and recorded, and his failings and virtues were equally open to the censure or admiration of his fellow men. The preceding period is naturally more obscure, from the comparative insignificance of his position, though the events in which he took an active part convulsed his native land and vibrated through all Europe. Scattered anecdotes of his boyhood and youth, detached scenes of his more mature years, and a weak connecting chain afforded by historians, who have often sacrificed accuracy to theory, and committed several errors in fact by negligence, and many errors in deduction by prepossession, are all which we have hitherto obtained regarding the life of Henry, as Prince and King of Navarre. I have endeavored in the following pages to bring more light into this obscure portion of his history, and have, I trust, been enabled to effect that object by peculiarly favorable circumstances.

Shortly after this work was written, the French Government, in pursuance of its admirable and magnificent plan of affording, for the first time, the materials of truth to historical research, commenced the publication of the "*Lettres Missives*" of Henry IV. under the superintendance of M. Berger de Xivrey, a gentleman, the accuracy of whose knowledge and the justness of whose views rendered him peculiarly qualified for the important task. I immediately stopped the printing of my own history,* although the work was already in the press, and for nearly four years have continued to compare the statements I had made with the facts as they appear in the *Lettres Missives*, of which, owing to the great care bestowed upon that publication, the volumes have only issued at long intervals. In pursuing this course I was gratified to find that in very few instances had I been led into error; but I was still more gratified to be enabled to add many fresh facts to those already recorded, and to throw light upon several subjects which I had been previously obliged to leave in some obscurity. In this very laborious undertaking I was aided by M. Berger de Xivrey with a degree of courtesy, kindness, and generous liberality, which was, indeed, to be expected from his high character and reputation, but which must ever command my gratitude and esteem.

* This was done with the ready consent of the publishers, Messrs. Boone, of whose liberal conduct and enlightened view, in a matter affecting the truth of history, I beg to express my very strong sense.

The period upon which I have thus endeavored to throw light, comprises events which had most important results, not alone as affecting the state of France at the time, but as working a fundamental change in society and advancing the progress of civilization in Europe. I believe that M. Guizot, in his lectures, has taken little notice of the effects of the terrible struggle which preceded the accession of Henry IV. upon the state of society in the country where it occurred; and, probably, his space did not permit, and his purpose did not require him to expatiate; but any one who will compare the habits of the people and the tone of the public mind under the last three French sovereigns of the house of Valois, with the same characteristics, at the end of the reign of Henry IV., will find that France was entering upon a new epoch, and that the wars of the League were the furnace in which old institutions and modes of thought were melted down to receive a new form. The strongholds of chivalry and the feudal system tottered and fell with age and their own weight; the fragments were afterwards battered down by Richelieu, the foundations undermined by the Regent Duke of Orleans, and the last vestiges swept away by the revolutionary harrow of the eighteenth century: but under Francis II. began the ruin of the great fabrics of the middle ages.

I cannot close this short Preface without expressing a deep regret that our own Government

has not yet found it possible to attempt something similar to that which has been done by the State in France for the illustration of her history. In our State Paper office, in our various record offices, and in several collections of archives, we possess invaluable treasures concealed from the public eye, or, at all events, accessible but to few. I am well aware that it is a custom—I might, perhaps, call it a principle—in England to leave all great *undertakings* to individual enterprise. I am well aware that serious difficulties might lay in the way of that which I propose; and I am not ignorant that something has been done to give a part of our public records to the world with great expense and very little fruit. But there are circumstances in which individual efforts can do next to nothing, and objects, to attain which, no exertion in the subjection of difficulties would be unadvisable.

The history of England yet remains to be written, and it never will be written with that degree of accuracy, which is necessary to instruction, till at least a judicious selection of the despatches and correspondence of the principal persons who figure in our annals has been published under the superintendance and authority of Government. Ten years ago I expressed the same opinion, and nothing has since occurred to make me doubt the necessity of the undertaking, or to induce me to suppose that, with due economy in the publication, the public demand for the volumes produced would not exonerate Government from all expense.

THE

LIFE OF HENRY IV.

KING OF FRANCE AND NAVARRE.

INTRODUCTION.

It has often been remarked that no wars are so cruel and sanguinary, as those in which religion takes a part. Nor does it appear that the character of the doctrine contended for, has the slightest effect in mitigating the rancour of enmity, or that the professors of the mild and beneficent principles of Christianity are in any degree less fierce, when engaged in religious strife, than the followers of the harsh and relentless Apostle of the scymetar. The Reformation, commencing in Germany, spread forth its principles to almost all surrounding countries; but every land to which they extended, soon displayed the germs of strife and persecution. This was especially the case in France, where the feudal system, in a state of decay, still left great power and influence to the principal nobles of the land, without enabling them to assert successfully their independence of all secular authority on points

of religious faith, as had been done by many of the German Princes. Persecution began early in France; and the same land, which had seen the sanguinary horrors of the crusade against the heretics of Albi and Toulouse, beheld, within a few years after the voice of Luther had dissolved for ever the fabric of Papistical supremacy, the cities of Lyons and Paris flaming with the faggots of superstition, and the wise and the devout expiating at the stake the crime of differing in faith from the predominant party. The usual effects of persecution, however, were soon perceptible in the rapid extension of the obnoxious tenets. Teachers of the new doctrine sprang up in various quarters, and courted that martyrdom which roused the enthusiasm and increased the number of their disciples. The learned and the good received as true, and acknowledged as pure, the lessons of the great Reformers; and, spreading rapidly to the higher classes, the views of Luther and his associates numbered amongst their adherents many of the most powerful and distinguished men of France. Princes of the royal blood avowed openly their attachment to the doctrines declared to be heretical by the Church of Rome; and, as it soon became impossible to deal with the multitude of Protestants by the mere arm of the executioner, armies were employed for the defence of the Roman Catholic faith, and for the suppression of the pretended heresy. Political objects were mingled, as usual, with religious prejudices, and

the flame of ambition gained additional intensity from the zealous fire of fanaticism, till at length the succession to the Crown itself was endangered by the religion of the legitimate heir.

In this chapter I shall attempt to give a brief sketch of the events which occurred in France, between the period of the Reformation and the birth of the Prince who afterwards ascended the throne under the name of Henry IV., without dwelling long upon the details, but endeavoring to present the reader with a distinct view of the several parties which convulsed the State, and to afford him some knowledge of the principal personages who took an early and active part in the troubles of the times.

Scarcely had Luther announced, with the boldness that characterized all his proceedings, the opinions which he entertained regarding the corruptions and usurpations of the Church of Rome, before the purifying doctrines of the Reformation found secret advocates in France. The great questions which agitated the religious world, were of course discussed not only by ecclesiastics, but by all persons of an enlightened and inquiring mind, and manifold evils and vices became apparent in the existing hierarchy, even to the eyes of those who admitted the doctrinal accuracy of the religion in which they had been educated. Many went farther still, and perceived falsehood and superstition in its tenets, tyranny and ambition in its dogmas; and others, though they had no just notion of what was

right, abandoned a faith in which they saw much that was wrong, without closely investigating whether that which they received in exchange was better. Others again discovered some degree of justice in the arguments of the innovators, without adopting their sentiments entirely, and endeavored to shield them from persecution, without taking part in their efforts.

In the last of these classes, probably, we ought to rank Marguerite de Valois, one of the first distinguished protectors of the Protestant teachers in France; for we have no proof that she ever actually adopted the Reformed religion, though she sheltered many of its professors from the vengeful arm of the Church of Rome. That Princess was the daughter of Charles of Orleans, duke of Angoulême, and Louisa of Savoy. She was the sister of Francis I. king of France, and successively the wife of Charles duke of Alencon, and Henry of Albret, king of Navarre. Her rank, her talents, but still more the tender affection which existed between herself and her brother, the King of France, enabled her to exert a kindly and generous influence in mitigating that monarch's zeal in favour of the Romish religion, and in guarding him against the furious counsels of those who sought to make him an instrument for crushing the doctrines of the Reformation in France. Whilst yet Duchess of Alencon, she was suspected of favoring the new sect which had sprung up, and was one of the princi-

pal protectors of the poet, Clement Marot, who, there can be little doubt, had adopted the views of Luther; and, after her union with the King of Navarre, the little mountainous principality of Bearn became a place of refuge for many of the leading Reformers, some of whom, on venturing from its precincts, suffered death in consequence of their tenets, while others, who owed their safety to her protection, became distinguished as the directors of the great religious movement of the times. Among the first of these were the Protestant martyrs, Berquin and Dolet, and amongst the last the famous John Calvin was the most conspicuous.

The Reformed Church, however, possessed another protector in the Royal family of France, and although less influential than Marguerite de Valois, Renée, duchess of Ferrára, daughter of Louis XII. exerted herself to the utmost of her power, both in Italy and her native country, to screen the Protestants from their intolerant enemies.

The persuasions of Marguerite, however, and the deep tenderness with which the King regarded her, though they often shook his resolution of persecuting the Protestant Church, and sometimes induced him even to listen to the doctrines of the Reformers, were ultimately rendered ineffectual by the power obtained over that monarch's mind by Francis, cardinal de Tournon, a man of great abilities and indefatigable activity; shrewd, specious, and remorseless, who stood forward as the zealous defender of the Papal

power, and the sanguinary persecutor of the French Protestants. Sometimes Marguerite gained a temporary ascendancy, and on one occasion, it would seem, induced Francis to send for Melancthon, in order that he might hear him discuss with the French ecclesiastics the question of the disunion of the Church. It is probable that her object was as much to enlighten her own mind and settle her wavering faith, as to serve the Protestants, or open the eyes of her brother. But her purpose was in this instance defeated by the art of the Cardinal, and the summons to Melancthon was recalled. Weakness is generally followed by violence; and the persecution of the innovators became more fierce and rigid* immediately after this change in the views of the monarch. Multitudes of those denounced as heretics were burned at the stake, religious spies spread themselves over the whole country, light words and private accusations were held as proofs of crime, and the King in person witnessed the agonizing death of his subjects without remorse or shame. So confident of their influence were the enemies of the Protestant faith, that they even ventured to attack the beloved sister of the monarch with private insinuations and public scorn;† but

* Maimbourg.

†The Professors of the College of Navarre, in 1533, had the indecency to bring her on the stage as a mad woman and heretic, and the vengeance of the King would probably have been severe, had not Marguerite herself interceded for the offenders.

Francis sternly silenced her secret accusers, and punished those who evinced their animosity towards her in a more public manner.

But though his love and tenderness proved a shield for his sister, in all other instances the King gave himself up to the wildest spirit of intolerance, and closed his reign with one great act of butchery, which horrified all but the most blood-thirsty enthusiasts, and covered his own death-bed with remorse. Amongst the mountains of Dauphiny a remnant of the old Waldenses had taken refuge, and had been suffered to pursue their course of peace, innocence, and industry, till the period of the general diffusion of the Protestant religion in France, when they hailed the newly-rising Church as a sister, and drew upon themselves the arm of persecution. The Parliament of Aix was directed to take cognizance of their heresy, and after long and reluctant delay on the part of that assembly, who were unwilling, it would appear, to proceed with the fanatical measures of the Court, a decree was pronounced for exterminating them from the land. Their houses were ordered to be destroyed, their fruit trees and orchards to be rooted up, and those who refused to receive the predominant religion were to be given to the sword. "Every thing was horrible and cruel in the sentence pronounced against them," says De Thou, "and all was more horrible and more cruel in the execution. Twenty-two towns and villages were burned, or

sacked with a degree of inhumanity almost without example, even in the history of the most barbarous nations." The Count de St. Grignan, at the head of the army which had been employed in Italy, was authorized to conduct the execution; and the lust and ferocity of a licentious soldiery was added to the superstitious cruelty of the most blood-thirsty religion that the world has ever known. Cabrières, Merindole, and twenty other towns or villages, became the scene of one universal massacre. Surprised during the night, and pursued from rock to rock, by the light of their burning houses, the inhabitants, we are told by the historian, only fled from one snare to fall into another. The cries and lamentations of the women and the children led the butchers to the place of their victims' retreat, and neither age nor sex was spared, neither virtue, dignity, nor station obtained respect. Voluntary submission itself had no effect in shielding the men from death, and the women from outrage and destruction. At Cabrières, all the females who could be found were shut up in a barn filled with straw, and burned alive; and eight hundred persons, men and women, were murdered in one of the churches. New-born infants were slaughtered, if the account of Aubigné may be believed, and even the Romanists, of whom there were several amongst the inhabitants of the proscribed towns, were not exempted from this indiscriminate butchery. The rest of the sentence was then carried into exe-

cution,—the houses were rased to the ground,—the gardens and fields destroyed,—the fruit trees, for which the district had become famous, rooted up,—and not a trace of cultivation left in a tract which had previously been one of the most peaceful, prosperous, and fertile in the south of France. We are told that the orders of the King were exceeded; we know that horror and remorse seized upon him, when he heard the extent of the cruelties which had been committed. On his death-bed he strictly enjoined his son to investigate the facts connected with these horrible atrocities, and to punish the guilty. But the solitary execution of the Advocate-general Guérin, who was probably, in reality, less culpable than many others, served but little to console the Reformers of France, or to afford them any prospect of security and justice.

Thus in 1545 was the military power for the first time employed in France against the Protestants, properly so called,* and although no civil war followed the act at the time, the germs of resistance were sown from that moment, and the teaching of Calvinistic doctrines was pursued with a degree of ardour and zeal which set at nought the abused

* I do not, of course, look upon the hostilities which took place against the Albigenses as having been directed against Protestants; the sectaries of Albi, however cruel and unjust might be their persecution, having undoubtedly imbibed many of the doctrines of the Manichean heresy, and differing in various points from any body of men deserving the name of Christians.

authority of the crown, and introduced dissension into the capital, and the principal Parliament of the kingdom.

During the reign of Francis I., the question of liberty of conscience remained merely a religious one, and neither the policy of factions, nor the ambition of individuals, made use of it for their several objects. In the reign of Henry II., however, new elements entered into the dispute, and it becomes necessary, from the period of that monarch's accession, to consider the general state of France, her relations with foreign countries, and the various parties which arose to struggle for power, and ultimately to convulse the whole realm, by violent efforts for their own aggrandisement. The death of the chivalrous, but rash and imprudent rival of Charles V., took place on the 31st of March, 1547, and historians in general have asserted that his successor ascended the throne with brighter prospects than any preceding King of France. That he was young, yet of mature age, accustomed to business, habituated to the conduct of wars and negotiations, surrounded by men of great abilities, possessed of a rich and abundant country, an unembarrassed revenue, and a full treasury, there can be no doubt; but there were many dangerous points in his situation which must also be taken into account.

The first in importance, amongst the perils which environed the son of Francis I., was his own inferiority to many whom it was his task to direct and

command. Had these men been without ambition, had they been personally devoted to himself, or bound by patriotic feelings to the service of the state, their superior abilities might have proved the stay and support of his feebler character, the safeguards of the crown and the security of France. Such, however, was not the case; selfish interests were the principal objects of all, or nearly all, and the talents which might have been turned to the advantage of the King, were either directed by his courtiers to obtain their own pre-eminence at his expense, or wasted in factious struggles with jealous and eager competitors. Another menacing point in the situation of Henry, is to be perceived in the religious dissensions which existed in the country, and which already began to assume a serious and alarming aspect, especially complicated as they were with the political relations of the French monarchs with other States. The external policy of France required her to appear as the protector of Protestants, and the friend of toleration; the maxims of her government in regard to her internal policy demanded the suppression of every religion but that of the State, and the persecution of all innovators. A great and extraordinary man of later times, indeed, contrived, by the power of his own genius, to reconcile these opposing tendencies, and to draw advantages even from the difficulties of a similar position. But Henry was not equal to the task; and, in his struggle for various objects inconsistent with each other, he laid a foundation for

that civil strife which shook the rule and desolated the kingdom of his children.

Immediately after his accession to the throne, the court of the new monarch divided itself into three parties, while a fourth was gradually springing up during the course of his reign, which became, in the end, as powerful as any of the others. At the head of these three parties appeared the princely house of Guise, the noble family of Montmorenci, and the famous Diana of Poitiers, the mistress, instructor, and chief counsellor of the King. The latter, endowed with a powerful, clear-sighted and comprehensive mind, amiable in manners, beautiful in person, and graceful in demeanor, possessed unbounded power through life over a monarch considerably younger than herself. According to the spirit of chivalrous gallantry which reigned in the court of Francis I., Henry at anearly age had been permitted to devote himself to the fair widow of Louis de Brèzé, who undertook to soften the rudeness of the Prince's demeanor and instruct him in those courteous arts which in youth he had too much neglected for the practice of arms. Some historians have endeavoured to prove that the connexion between Henry and Diana of Poitiers was restrained within the limits of virtuous though extravagant gallantry, and on one of the medals of the age she is represented as treading upon a figure of Cupid, with the legend "Omnium victorem vici;" but, if the high coloured pictures of Brantome, and the satirical verses of Clement

Marot can only be received as shewing the suspicions of the court, the words of Diana herself just before the death of Henry, can leave little doubt upon the mind of any one that the tie between them was of a more tender and less legitimate nature.

Through her influence over the King, the widow of Louis de Brèzé, who, shortly after his accession, was created Duchess of Valentinois, possessed absolute power at the court; and her favor was naturally sought by both the other parties, though they endeavored at the same time by every means to render themselves necessary to the young monarch, if not independent of his good will. Diana now leaned to the one, now to the other, balancing them with considerable political skill, though passion occasionally seems to have had a share in her dealing with the rival factions, and she apparently never attempted the more wise and patriotic course of weakening them both for the benefit of the state. A multitude of inferior courtiers immediately attached themselves to her in the pleasing hope of posts and emoluments; but, before the end of Henry's reign, his mistress found it necessary to guard against the future, by allying herself to one of the two powerful houses which appeared as her rivals in the struggle for authority.

Next in favor with the King to the fair Duchess of Valentinois was a nobleman who had fallen into disgrace during the latter part of the reign of Francis I. Anne Duke of Montmorenci, Constable of France. The companion of the youth of Francis,

and counsellor of his middle age, Anne de Montmorenci, had never attained the undesirable eminence of favorite, an office uniformly bestowed by monarchs upon men who are unfit for any other station. His hold therefore upon the King rested solely upon long intimacy and great services; but after he had displayed, during many years, all the qualities of a great general, and some of the requisites of a great politician, he was unaccountably dismissed from the court in the year 1541. During the six years that followed, before the death of Francis, the Constable remained at Chantilly, or Ecouen, making no efforts to soften his enemies at the court, but keeping up with the Dauphin, who had studied the art of war under his auspices, a correspondence which was anything but pleasing to Francis, whose latter days were clouded by jealous enmity towards his successor. On his death-bed the monarch is said to have cautioned the Dauphin against calling to his councils the man who had so long directed his own; and several causes might combine to prompt an act of seeming ingratitude towards one who had certainly rendered the most important services. With manners rude and harsh, with pride, which even the commanding character of Francis scarcely kept within the bounds of respect, with a sanguinary ferocity which made him hated and dreaded by the people, Montmorenci joined a degree of ambition which, under a weak monarch, or in difficult times, might have become dangerous to the state. His

avidity was also notorious; and, insatiable of all that could aggrandise his family, he seemed to take as a right that which was granted as a favor, and to conceive that his services were a full equivalent for all that his monarch could bestow.

Impressed with but little confidence in his son's genius, firmness, or intelligence, Francis might well imagine that Montmorenci would prove an unsafe minister to his successor; but his caution was without effect, his dying advice neglected, and the first act of Henry II. was to recall the Constable to his court. It was Anne de Montmorenci who received the new King at St. Germain on his return from Rambouillet, where Francis I. had closed his eyes; and from that moment he was for many years as powerful in the councils of the monarch, as the Duchess of Valentinois was in his court. The favor of Henry, however, and great service rendered to the state did not form the only foundation of the Constable's power, or the sole support of that distinct party of which he was the head. The numerous branches of his illustrious family, their traditionary exploits in defence of the crown, their vast possessions and great abilities, the important offices they held in the state, and the multitude of dependants who looked to them for advancement, gave the faction of Montmorenci strength to sustain itself for many years against the princely house of Guise. Among the persons attached to the Constable by the ties of blood, it may be necessary to mention two of the most distinguished men of their

age, who, though young at the period of Henry's accession, had rendered important services to the crown before the close of his reign, and took a remarkable share in all the transactions which followed. These were Gaspard and Francis de Chatillon, the sons of Gaspard de Coligni, Lord of Chatillon and Marshal of France, by Louisa de Montmorenci, sister of the Constable. The elder of the two brothers is known in history under the name of the Admiral de Coligni, the younger is distinguished by that of D'Andelot, from a small estate which he inherited. A third son of the same family entered the Church, and through the influence, it would seem, of Montmorenci, was raised to the purple at the early age of sixteen.

Coligni and D'Andelot naturally studied the art of war under their celebrated uncle; but, even after the period of his disgrace, they continued to serve, with the greatest distinction in the field, during the rest of the reign of Francis, and rose step by step to various high offices in the army. Nearly of the same age as the Dauphin, his companions in arms, and the nephews of his famous Minister, the accession of Henry was of course favorable to their interests, and attaching themselves to the party of Montmorenci, they became opposed, at a very early period, to the rival faction of Lorraine. The Constable himself had several sons, but it is unnecessary here to dwell upon their character, or to sketch their history in this place, as none of them

played any very distinguished part previous to the birth of Henry IV. I shall have to notice, hereafter, more than one of Montmorenci's children, and especially the second, who, on the death of his elder brother, succeeded to the dukedom, and also obtained the important post of Constable under Henry IV.

The third party which, at the termination of the reign of Francis I. had already acquired a degree of power, that the dying monarch saw might become dangerous to his successors, was that of the house of Guise, newly planted in France, but distantly allied to the royal family, and distinguished by several important services rendered to the crown. Claude Count of Guise, and Marquis of Mayenne, the fifth son of René II., Duke of Lorraine, had presented himself at the court of Louis XII. in company with his elder brother, and by the favour of the French monarch obtained the hand of Antoinette de Bourbon, daughter of Francis Count of Vendome. Handsome in person, prepossessing in manners, full of chivalrous gallantry, distinguished in arms, supple as well as ambitious, and dignified though courteous, the Count of Guise easily won the regard of Francis I. and long enjoyed his favour. Honours and distinctions were heaped upon him, and while he courted the good-will of the monarch, he contrived by generosity, flattery, and the display of daring courage to gain the love and admiration of the court and people of France. During the captivity of Francis, he became the chief confidant

of the regent, Louisa of Savoy, and the great hope of the nation, and though the shattered state of the French armies prevented him from undertaking any great operations, yet the plan which he is reported to have advised, for ransoming all the prisoners taken at Pavia, and the liberality which he himself shewed in aiding the poorer members of the French nobility who had suffered by that terible defeat, gave a high idea of his judgment, and confirmed his influence. The destruction of a large body of Lutherans at Saverne, obtained for him religious distinction, and marked him as the enemy of the rising sect. At the same time it delivered France from a numerous band of enemies who threatened to ravage several of her eastern provinces; and Francis being set at liberty, shewed his gratitude for this and other services, by erecting the county of Guise into a duchy in favour of his friend. At length, however, the monarch's affection for the Duke of Guise declined. The style and demeanour of a sovereign prince which he continued to maintain at the court of France, gave umbrage to Francis, and offended many of the high officers of the crown; but with the great body of the nobility, with the people, and even with the parliament of Paris itself he retained his popularity.

A new war and the various difficulties which it brought upon the King of France, compelled him to call to his councils his most skilful and experienced generals; and amongst these undoubtedly the Duke of Guise bore a principal rank. Mont-

morenci, who had always shewn himself jealous of the great influence of Guise, and indignant at the pride of his demeanour, received the principal command in Provence, invaded in 1536 by the Emperor in person; but the northern frontier of the kingdom was defended by Guise, and the Duke of Vendome; and although the successes of the Lorrainese prince were not equal to those of his great rival, they added infinitely more to his favour with the people of the capital. An army under the command of the Count of Nassau, advanced rapidly from the side of Flanders, and laid siege to the town of Peronne. The inhabitants of Paris, seeing neither powerful forces nor strong places between their walls and the enemy, gave themselves up to weak and unnecessary alarm. They saw in imagination the Count of Nassau at their gates, and lamentation and anxiety took the place of activity and exertion. In the midst of this scene, however, the Duke of Guise appeared in person amongst them, reassured them by his presence, encouraged them by his words; and, leaving his wife and children in the capital as a pledge of his exertions to defend it, he hastened back to the army in order to co-operate vigorously with the Duke of Vendome. His assistance, and the reinforcements which he contrived to throw into the place, by a daring and skilful stratagem, saved the town of Peronne, after a long and fierce siege, during which the assailants several times penetrated within the walls, but were driven back with terrible loss. The Count

of Nassau, after many fruitless efforts, abandoned the enterprise, and retreated into Flanders.* Their deliverance was never forgotten by the people of Paris, and their attachment to the house of Guise was, from that moment, strong and invariable. During the wars, which continued almost to the end of the reign of Francis I., the Duke of Guise was continually employed, and proved himself one of the most successful and fortunate of the French generals. He attached himself strongly, we are told, to Henry II. while Dauphin, and is supposed to have instigated a secret protest against the treaty of Crepi, which act might have ended in producing civil war, had not the death of the Duke of Orleans and that of Francis I. changed the position of affairs, and rendered the obnoxious part of the treaty of no effect.

The ambition of the family of Guise was well known to Francis I.; and the vast power which the Duke had acquired in his dominions, his popularity with the turbulent people of the capital, his influence with the nobility and the army, the pride which he displayed in putting himself upon a level with the princes of the blood royal, and the title which he affected, of Defender of the Faith and

* Anquetil, in his account of the siege of Peronne, makes not the slightest mention of the Duke of Guise, though the best authority that we have, Martin du Bellai, puts his name before that of the Duke of Vendome, and shews that it was the bold and skilful stratagem of that Prince, coming in aid of the valour and ability of Marshal Fleuranges and the determination and courage of the inhabitants, to which the deliverance of Peronne is to be attributed.

enemy of heretics, rendered the monarch apprehensive that the grasping spirit of Guise and his sons, with difficulty restrained under his own rule, would know no bounds under that of his successor. We are assured, that on his death-bed, he warned the Dauphin of the aspiring character of the family, and besought him not to elevate them rashly.*

Henry, however, in this instance, as in all others, neglected the counsels of his father, and the family of Guise was permitted to divide the court with the party of Montmorenci, and that of Diana of Poitiers. How strong was the Duke's favor with the King is proved by the fact, that notwithstanding the influence of the Constable, the ancient rival of the Lorraine Prince, he was permitted at the coronation of the monarch, to take precedence of the Duke of Montpensier, a member of the royal house. At this time his family comprised six sons, several of whom became remarkable in the course of the two succeeding reigns. The eldest, Francis, Prince of Joinville, and Duke of Aumale, succeeded him as Duke of Guise about three years after the accession of Henry. Charles, of whom we shall have frequent occasion to speak, under the name of the Cardinal of

* The expressions of Francis I. upon this, and other occasions, gave rise to the following verses which were common in the times of the League.

"Le Roy Francois ne faillit point,
Quand il prédit que ceux de Guise,
Mettroient ses enfans en pourpoint
Et tous ses sujets in chemise."

Lorraine, as one of the great leaders of the factions of those times, entered early into the church, and at the age of fifteen, was nominated to the archbishopric of Rheims. Louis, the next, also chose the ecclesiastical profession, in which he obtained several rich benefices, the bishopric of Metz, and the cardinal's hat. He is known in history under the title of the Cardinal of Guise, but being of a somewhat indolent and luxurious disposition, he appeared but little upon the political scene, and acquired the inglorious appellation of the "Bottle Cardinal." Another son, Claude, on the death of his father, succeeded to the estates and title of Aumale, and distinguished himself considerably by his pride, by his fanaticism, and by his courage, though greatly inferior in mind to his two elder brothers. René, a younger son of the first Duke of Guise, inherited the Marquisate of Elbeuf, and the sixth became Grand Prior of France. The immense wealth of the house of Guise seemed multiplied, rather than divided, on the death of Claude; the highest offices of the state and the church were in the hands of his children; and the fortune of his brother, the first Cardinal of Lorraine, soon after added other revenues to those which the family already possessed.

Thus, at the accession of Henry II., the three parties, which at once formed themselves in France, were severally headed by Diana of Poitiers, the mistress of the King, to whom both

the others were obliged to pay court from time to time; by the Constable, Anne de Montmorenci, to whom were attached the great house of Chatillon, and most of the princes of the blood, who feared and hated the race of Lorraine; and by Claude, Duke of Guise, supported by his own powerful family, by the love of the people, by the approbation of the parliament, and by a crowd of friends and adherents amongst the inferior nobility.

A fourth party has been added by some historians, but it can scarcely be said to have existed at the death of Francis I. Catherine de Medicis, the young, talented, and beautiful wife of Henry; possessed no power in the court, no authority in the state. By her great abilities, by her cunning, by her unscrupulous use of all means, justifiable and unjustifiable, she succeeded at length, not only in drawing around her a numerous body of adherents, but in forcing the most powerful of the rival factions to aid in her schemes, as the price of success in its own. But this ascendancy was not attained till after the death of her husband; and, in the meantime, she was forced alternately to court the house of Montmorenci, which she detested, and to bow before Diana of Poitiers, the chief object of her jealous enmity.

It may seem strange that no effort was made by the princes of the blood royal, to check the progress of the various ambitious men, whose struggles for power were likely to convulse the kingdom in which they had so deep an interest. But at that time,

no personages of any very great distinction were found amongst the royal family of France. The most prominent princes of the blood were the Duke of Montpensier, a man of considerable abilities as a soldier, of an amiable disposition, where bigotry did not interfere, and of high principles, though fanatically attached to the Roman Catholic faith; Antoine of Bourbon, Duke of Vendome, who shortly afterwards married Jeanne d'Albret, in whose right he ultimately became King of Navarre, a weak and irresolute prince, equally incapable of leading or following in the difficult strife of party; and Louis I., Prince of Condé, seventh child of Charles, Duke of Vendome, full of high and generous feeling, bold, resolute, and skilful, though somewhat rash and hasty. But at the period of the accession of Henry, Condé had not yet completed his seventeenth year, while his brother Charles, afterwards known as the Cardinal de Bourbon, though considerably older than himself, displayed neither in youth nor in age, any of those talents which qualify men for leading in troublous times.

Thus, in the year 1547, no one was to be found amongst the princes of the blood of sufficient ability and influence, to oppose, successfully, the great parties which were already formed at the court; and the conduct of the royal family was marked with vacillation and uncertainty, though the Montmorencis frequently counted its chief members amongst their supporters.

We are told, in the writings of the time, that such was the avidity of the leaders of the three parties at the court of Henry II., that not a post, employment, dignity, or pension escaped them, but each rivalled the other in seizing every thing as it fell vacant, either for themselves, their families, or their followers. They even kept the physicians of Paris in their pay, in order to obtain the earliest information of the approaching death of any officer of the crown, that they might instantly secure the reversion of his office; and thus Henry himself had seldom an opportunity of granting a favor to any person independent of the factions that surrounded him.

At first, indeed, the power of Montmorenci and of Diana of Poitiers, was completely triumphant; and they disposed of the court and the council as they thought fit. They banished Madame d'Etampes, the mistress of Francis I. All her partisans, whom she had loaded with posts and riches, were disgraced and threatened even with death itself, ransoming their lives by the cession of their estates and the resignation of their offices. Marshal Annebaut, an old rival of the Constable, was driven from the court, and the Cardinal de Tournon, so long all-powerful with Francis, was excluded from a share in the administration.

It was not alone, however, to his personal enemies that Montmorenci displayed the severity of his character. During his long exile, the morose acerbity of his nature seemed only to have become

more bitter and repulsive. Few ventured to approach him except on business, the courtiers fled from his presence and left vacant the ante-chambers of the King on the approach of his harsh Minister; Henry himself experienced an unpleasant restraint in the society of his own servant; and while the army submitted quietly to the wise but somewhat rigorous regulations of the Constable, the parliament of Paris, venturing to remonstrate against some encroachments upon its authority, and some steps dangerous to the just administration of the law, was reproved by Montmorenci with domineering arrogance, and threatened with punishment for asserting the existence of privileges which had never been before denied.

"Thou art a pleasant calf," said the rude soldier to one of the high officers of the law, who ventured to maintain the dignity and independence of the magistracy. "The King knows well what you are. You hold all from him, and will be nothing again as soon as he wills it."

It may easily be supposed that a man who could thus speak and act, might find persons to esteem his candor, and admire his abilities, but would disarm few enemies and obtain few friends. Henry felt, however, that the Constable's military and political talents were absolutely necessary to him at the commencement of his reign; and indeed, if we except the Duke of Guise, there was no one at that time to be found in France so capable of conducting the councils and leading the armies of the young monarch.

The reverses which Francis I. had sustained throughout the whole of his life, in the unceasing struggle with his more astute rival Charles V., had compelled him to cede, by various treaties, the title of the crown of France to several important provinces which had long been the objects of French cupidity. Untaught by his father's experience, Henry determined, sooner or later, to re-assert the claims which had been abandoned; and, though at first he proceeded with great caution, his movements from the beginning indicated to the wary Emperor the course he was about to pursue. Whether Montmorenci himself advised Henry to renew a war which had already proved so disastrous, we do not actually know; but the steps which were taken to render that war successful, were evidently devised by the same cautious and provident mind which had saved Provence from the power of the enemy. In a long tour through the frontier provinces of the kingdom, Henry visited all the most important fortresses, strengthened their defences, increased their garrisons, and furnished them with ample provisions and munitions of war. Remonstrances also were addressed by the King of France to Charles V. in regard to existing treaties, which were shewn to be confused, vague, and sometimes contradictory. The early death of the Duke of Orleans, the younger brother of the French monarch, to whom had been promised the investiture of the Milanese, had rendered several parts of those treaties absolutely inapplicable; and Henry now

proposed that a revision of all such documents should take place, and that a new act of pacification should be drawn up between the French and Imperial crowns upon a more clear and equitable basis.

The Emperor listened and replied vaguely, pursued his course in Germany, where he had just triumphed over the League of Smalkald at the battle of Muhlberg; and in Italy, with the usual steady march of his ambition, he soon after contrived to render himself master of the city of Placentia, on the murder of Peter Louis Farnese, his share in which transaction is not very distinct. An attempt was also made upon Parma, but without success, and the father of the murdered man, who then wore the Roman tiara, loudly demanded that the Emperor should punish the assassins, and should restore Placentia to Octavio Farnese, the son of the deceased prince. Charles, however, could not make up his mind to resign the rich prize he had obtained, and the Pope, full of wrath and indignation, applied to the King of France to unite with him and the Venetians in an offensive league against the Emperor. But Henry, though evidently determined from the first to strike a blow for the possession of the Milanese, was not yet prepared for war; and another project of great magnitude, as well as some serious internal commotions, combined to delay the commencement of the struggle. He listened to the overtures of the Pontiff, assured him of his good wishes, and it would seem pro-

mised him armed assistance at some future period; but he refrained from doing any act which might commit him to immediate hostilities.

It had been an invariable part of the policy of the French monarchs to support the crown of Scotland against the superior power of the neighbouring country; and an opportunity now presenting itself, which had never before occurred, for establishing the rule of France in the northern portion of Great Britain, Henry eagerly hastened to seize upon the favourable moment. His operations were somewhat hurried, indeed, by the proceedings of the court of England, which shewed itself as eager to obtain the important prize of the hand of the infant heiress of the Scottish throne, as France itself.

It may be necessary, however, before I proceed farther, to shew briefly the state of the relations between Scotland and England at the death of Francis I., in order that the reader may see the importance of the object contended for and the difficulties of the struggle for ascendancy in which Henry now engaged. James V. of Scotland, the nephew of Henry VIII. of England, had succeeded early in life to the crown of a rude and disturbed country, and had soon shewn his attachment to French counsels, and his determination to oppose the somewhat domineering spirit of his English kinsman. Visiting the court of Francis I., at Lyons, James demanded the hand of that monarch's daughter, Magdalen, and married her in the year 1536. Her death followed shortly, and, after a brief period

of widowhood, he formed an alliance with Mary of Lorraine, Dowager Duchess of Longueville, daughter of Claude, first Duke of Guise. War between England and Scotland soon followed, in consequence of the doubts and suspicions which James entertained of his uncle; and, frustrated in all his views, partly by his own weakness, and partly by the turbulence of his nobles, the King of Scotland died not long after his second marriage, leaving, as successor to the crown, the famous Mary Stuart, then but a few days old.

Henry VIII. immediately attempted to secure the young Queen as a bride for his infant son, and by a treaty concluded in London in 1543, the hand of Mary was promised to Prince Edward, in despite of all the efforts of Cardinal Beatoun, and the Queen Dowager, Mary of Lorraine. Means, however, were employed to prevent the infant sovereign from falling into the power of Henry of England; and, during the rest of that monarch's reign a long series of wars and negotiations took place, which, notwithstanding the English success in arms, removed the object of the King's cupidity farther from his grasp than before. One of his dying commands, however, was to the effect that his policy should be undeviatingly pursued towards Scotland; and the Protector, Duke of Somerset, accordingly marched into the north at the head of a considerable army, and crossed the border on the 2nd of September, 1547. Negotiations were in the meantime actively proceeding between

France and Scotland, and arrangements were made for removing the young Queen from her native country and marrying her to the Dauphin, Francis, the heir of the French throne. Before this could be effected, Somerset met the Scottish army on the banks of the Esk, and notwithstanding their numerical superiority, totally defeated them in the battle of Pinkey. Leith and Edinburgh were immediately taken; but Somerset was obliged, by intrigues at the court of England, to abandon the neighbouring country without reaping the fruits of his victory. Ambassadors were sent to France, by Cardinal Beatoun and Mary of Lorraine, eagerly beseeching Henry II. to send armed succour with as little delay as possible; and the French monarch, unwilling to abandon the immense advantage of uniting the crown of Scotland to that of France, found it expedient to dissemble his designs against the Emperor, till the contest for the hand of the young Queen was terminated.

While these transactions were taking place, Henry and his court were proceeding with great pomp and display from town to town, throughout the frontier provinces of his dominions, passing by Champagne, Brie, Burgundy, and Provence, and about the middle of the year 1548, entering the territories of Piedmont, and residing a short time at Turin. While reposing at the latter place, couriers arriving from Guienne brought the unpleasant intelli-

gence that the people of that important but turbulent district, together with those of Angoulême and Saintonge, were in actual revolt in consequence of some edicts for the collection of the gabelle and other revenues. The origin of the grievance dated as far back as the reign of Francis I., and feeling perhaps that the gabelle was odious in itself, and that the people had great cause to complain, both of the manner in which it was collected, and the objects on which it was employed, Henry shewed, at first, a disposition to treat the insurgents with lenity, contrary to the advice of Montmorenci, who breathed nothing but vengeance and punishment against them.* The mildness of the King, however, as is too frequently the case, only encouraged the inhabitants of the disturbed districts to proceed to fresh acts of violence. The storehouses of the gabelle were forced open and plundered; the luxurious mansions of the collectors were attacked, and many of those who had taken part in receiving the impost were massacred. The town of Bordeaux itself, was for some time completely in the hands of the rebels, and Moneins, the King's lieutenant was treacherously murdered in cold

* The third book of the Memoirs of Vielleville, assures us that the advice of the Constable was to exterminate the inhabitants of the revolted districts, whom he represented as the most mutinous of the French subjects, and to repeople the country with a new race. A sanguinary proceeding to which Henry would by no means consent.

blood. It now became necessary to act with vigor if not with severity; and Henry detached a part of the troops which he had collected on the frontier, to reduce the revolted provinces to obedience, dividing the army destined to effect this object into two corps, and placing one under the command of the Constable, while the other was led by Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Aumale, the eldest son of the Duke of Guise. This prince was now rising rapidly in the favor of the King, and his graceful and polished manners did not form a greater contrast with the harsh rudeness of Montmorenci, than his clemency and urbanity with the Constable's sternness and severity. The difference of character between the two men was strongly marked in their execution of the enterprise now entrusted to them. The provinces which were visited by the Duke of Aumale, were reduced to subjection with very little bloodshed, but Montmorenci carried the sword without the balance of Justice, and the most dreadful enormities were committed with his sanction and by his order. Marching upon Bordeaux he was met by a deputation of the inhabitants, amongst whom order had been by this time completely re-established, but he would listen to no remonstrances or petitions, rejected the keys of the town which were offered to him, and causing the soldiers to throw down thirty toises of the wall, he entered through the breach, at the head of his army, with matches lighted, swords drawn, and lances in the rest. The unfortunate citizens read

in this conduct the treatment they were to expect; and giving the form of law to his violent proceedings, by the aid of Stephen de Neuilly, a Master of Requests, whom he had brought with him, the Constable went on to condemn the whole town as guilty of rebellion, inflicting upon it various punishments, equally extraordinary and severe. He suppressed at once the whole magistracy of the city, he suspended the parliament, he took the bells from the churches, he commanded the town-house to be rased to the ground, and he compelled the judges and principal officers of the place, with a hundred of the most wealthy citizens to dig up the corpse of the King's lieutenant with their nails, and to carry it themselves to the cathedral of St. Andrew. He likewise condemned to death a hundred of the chief inhabitants, and inflicted severe fines upon others. So cruel and rigorous were his proceedings, indeed, that Henry felt himself called upon to interfere, and greatly to mitigate the sentence which had been pronounced. The sedition, however, in the south of France was effectually crushed, and the very name of the Constable became a terror to the untractable people of Guienne.

In Scotland the policy of the King of France met with complete success. The veteran troops which he sent into that country, under Strozzi, were soon followed by a still larger body, led by Montalembert d'Essé, who brought with him the Rhinegrave at the head of three thousand Germans

in the pay of France, and two thousand French infantry, commanded by Francis de Chatillon, afterwards celebrated under the name of d'Andelot. This succour put the Scotch government in a state to oppose successfully the farther progress of the Protector Somerset; and, while the English troops were held in check, the young Queen embarked for France, and landed in that country, under engagement to give her hand to the eldest son of the French monarch.

The English, however, still possessed several fortresses in Scotland; and in France itself the town of Boulogne, which had been captured by Henry VIII., remained in the hands of his successor, as a pledge for the payment of a considerable sum of money. To recover the latter place, and to induce the Protector Somerset to withdraw his troops from Scotland, now became the principal desire of Henry II., and for that purpose he prepared to have recourse to arms, in case the negotiations, which had been proceeding for some time, should prove abortive. Steps were taken for putting Boulogne itself into a state of blockade; d'Andelot was recalled from Scotland to take part in the operations; and Coligni, his brother, displayed his military skill, in raising several new forts and augmenting others, to complete the insulation of the city, and prevent the entrance of supplies during the winter. Somerset, however, embarrassed with domestic factions, listened willingly to pacific

counsels, and openly proposed the surrender of Boulogne. The very idea was received with high indignation in England, and formed one of the chief heads of accusation against the Protector, who ere long was driven from power. The weakness of a minority, however, and the struggle of faction, still continued in this country, and after some warlike operations, which tended little to the honor of the British arms, Boulogne was restored to France by those who had wrested his power from the hands of Somerset. The treaty entered into on this occasion, stipulated that four hundred thousand crowns should be paid to England; that the fortresses which Edward held in Scotland should be surrendered or dismantled, and that he should virtually resign his claim to the hand of the young Queen, by agreeing not again to make war upon the neighbouring country without fresh cause.

Thus terminated, for a time, the hostilities of France against England; and it was even proposed, as a bond of union between the two crowns, that the Princess Elizabeth, eldest daughter of the French king, should be united to the English monarch, Edward VI. A period of repose succeeded, but we must pause for a moment, to notice some other events which had taken place in France previous to the conclusion of the short and insignificant war with the neighbouring country.

During the progress of the King through the Bourbonnois, in the month of October, 1548, was celebrated

the marriage of Anthony of Bourbon, Duke of Vendome and first prince of the blood, with Jeanne d'Albret, only daughter of Henry, King of Navarre, by Margaret, sister of Francis I., from which union sprang that prince, who subsequently succeeded to the throne under the title of Henry IV.; and not long after, Francis of Lorraine, the eldest son of the Duke of Guise, was united to the daughter of Hercules Duke of Ferrara by the Princess René, daughter of Louis XII., from which alliance issued Henry Duke of Guise, whose power and ambition convulsed the kingdom, and shook the throne of France. Scarcely had the Duke of Guise, and Margaret of Navarre, beheld the marriages of their children, ere they quitted the busy scene in which they had played so conspicuous a part; the former dying in the year 1550, and the latter in December, 1549.

Shortly before the death of the Queen of Navarre, the King of France made his solemn entry into Paris, an event accompanied by the display of extraordinary splendor. Pageants and tournaments, and combats on the Seine, marked the rejoicings of the court and the Parisians; but the scene would not have been complete without the exhibition of barbarous superstition and cruel fanaticism. On the 4th of July, Henry ordained a solemn procession to propitiate God for the extirpation of heresy:* the four Mendicant orders, the regular Clergy,

* "Afin qu'il pleust à Dieu extirper les heresies," says Denis Sauvage.

the University, the Almoners, the different Monastic bodies, the Swiss Guards, the Gentlemen of the King's Household, the Abbots, Bishops, and Archbishops, the Cardinals who happened to be in Paris, the King, the Queen, the Court, the body of the Law, together with the coffins of St. Genevieve and St. Marceau, with banners, trumpets, drums, torches and wax tapers, proceeded from the church of St. Paul to the cathedral of Notre Dame, where a solemn mass was celebrated; and, after the King and Queen had dined at the Archbishop's palace, the royal personages and their attendants returned to their place of dwelling at the Tournelles, pausing by the way to witness the burning of several of the monarch's subjects, who had ventured too openly to avow their attachment to the Reformed religion.

Several other executions for heresy took place in Paris about the same time; and, on one of these occasions, we are told, the unhappy man at the stake fixed his eyes with so stern and reproachful an expression upon the King, who happened to be watching his torments from a neighbouring window, that the monarch was struck with some feelings of terror and remorse, and, retiring in haste, declared he would never behold such a spectacle again. The persecution of the Reformers, however, continued; and a severe edict against them preceded Henry's armed interference in favor of the Protestant Princes of Germany, which took place shortly after the conclusion of peace with England.

Previous to entering into any detail of the events which occurred during the war between the Emperor and his German subjects, it will be necessary to speak of the affairs of Italy, and to trace the commencement of hostilities in that country between the French and Imperial troops. We have already seen the vehement indignation which was excited in the breast of the Pope Paul III. by the murder of his son, and the occupation of Placentia by the forces of the Empire. His grandson, Octavio Farnese, the heir to the territories of the murdered man, at first placed implicit trust in the Papal court, and looked with hope and expectation to the negotiations entered into with France. Henry's delay in affording aid, however, drove Paul to seek some device for recovering Placentia from the hands of the Emperor, and his only resource seemed to be to reannex the two duchies to the ecclesiastical territory, believing that respect for the Church might have some effect in altering the Emperor's resolution of retaining Placentia. It was necessary, however, to offer Octavio Farnese something as a compensation for the projected seizure of his dominions; but in the meantime, using fraud and force previous to argument, Paul called his grandson to Rome, and at the same time despatched Camillo Orsino, general of the Papal troops, to Parma, with orders to make himself master of the town. This was easily accomplished, and the small place of Camirino was then proposed to Octavio as an equivalent for the duchy of Parma. The young Duke, however, treated

the offer with contempt; and, being allied to Charles V. by marriage, he determined to cast himself upon the generosity of the Emperor, rather than depend longer upon the intriguing, but feeble old man, who, under the pretext of assisting him, attempted to strip him of his just possession. Withdrawing himself secretly from the Papal court, he hastened to Parma, and endeavoured to regain the citadel. But the shrewdness and fidelity of Orsino frustrated all his efforts, and retiring to the castle of Torchiara, he opened a negotiation with Gonzaga, the Imperial governor of Milan, for the purpose of entering into some convention with the Emperor. The news of these transactions threw Paul into a state of agitation, rage, and grief, which rendered him an easy prey to disease. Very shortly after the tidings of his grandson's proceedings had been communicated to him, he was seized with fever, and died on the 10th of November, 1549, at the age of eighty-two.

The day before his death, Paul, touched with the situation of Octavio, and fearing that he would cast himself into the arms of the Emperor, caused a brief to be written to Orsino commanding him to put the young Duke in possession of Parma. But an intentional or accidental delay took place; the Pope died before his commands reached the general, and Orsino continued to hold the duchy for the Church. Believing that ambitious motives instigated the Papal officer to retain the duchy of Parma, the Emperor and the King of France endeavoured,

by every sort of intrigue and inducement, to bind Orsino to their interests. But that commander remained faithful to his trust, and on the 8th of February, the Cardinal John di Monte was elected Pope, by the influence and assistance of Cardinal Farnese. The first emotions of gratitude induced the new Pope, who took the name of Julius III., to restore to Octavio Farnese the town and citadel of Parma, and the young Duke now found himself embarrassed by his negotiations with Charles, who continued resolutely to hold Placentia, one of the most important places in his dominions.

The year 1550 passed in intrigues on the part of the Emperor to obtain possession of Parma; and it is even said that he offered in exchange the town of Sienna, engaging to build a citadel in it for the Duke's security. The dangerous position in which he was placed, compelled Farnese to apply to the Papal court for assistance, but the only reply which he could obtain from Julius III. was, "that he must help himself as well as he could."* Under these circumstances the young Duke had but one resource, which he instantly adopted, and opening a negotiation with the King of France, he concluded a treaty with that monarch on the 27th of May, 1551. By virtue of this convention, Henry II. took the house of Farnese under his protection, and engaged to maintain, for the defence of Parma, two thousand infantry and a small body of cavalry; to pay to Octavio an-

* Muratori, ad ann. 1551.

nually twelve thousand crowns of gold; and to give him further relief and assistance in all times of need.

No sooner did the Pope become acquainted with this negotiation than he perceived in it great danger to himself, and began to tremble lest the Emperor should visit on his head the offence thus given by Farnese. He left no means in his power untried to break the league between Octavio and Henry; persuasions, remonstrances, monitories, and Papal censures were directed against the Duke, and, in the end, the fief was declared forfeited, and Octavio deprived of the title of Gonfaloniere of the Church. At the same time the wrath of the Emperor fell heavily upon the house of Farnese, and so menacing was the aspect of affairs that the aid promised by Henry was eagerly sought by the Duke of Parma; nor was France now disposed to make any delay. A French garrison, under the famous de Thermes, entered the city at the first call; and the Pope, seeing war about to break forth, became alarmed at the consequences of his own proceedings, desisted from ravaging the district of Castro, into which he had sent a body of troops, and endeavoured by negotiations with France to avert the impending hostilities.*

* Robertson, in his History of Charles V. implies, that the Pope applied at once to the Emperor for armed assistance against Octavio Farnese; but this is shewn by Muratori not to have been the case, and it is proved that Julius endeavoured to prevent the war, although, beyond all doubt, the Imperial general Gonzaga made use of the Pope's name to screen his attack upon Parma.

Gonzaga, governor of Milan, however, committed to interminable enmity with the house of Farnese by the share he had taken in the death of Peter Ludovic, urged on hostilities; and, in the month of June, he entered the territory of Parma, and ravaged the country far and wide. The Emperor, indeed, affected to be acting merely as the ally of the Pope, while the King of France appeared as the protector of the house of Farnese. Fresh troops, however, were poured into Italy by the French monarch; and, while Gonzaga advanced upon the city of Parma, Marshal Strozzi fixed his head-quarters at Mirandola, gathered together what troops he could raise, and kept open a communication with de Thermes, notwithstanding all that the Imperial general could do to effect the blockade of the city. Brissac, Montluc, and several other celebrated French officers, were despatched to Piedmont, and the chivalrous nobility of France hastened in eager multitudes to the scene of war.

Events were preparing, however, which soon called the arms of France to another quarter. The triumph of the Emperor Charles V., over the League of Smalkald, had only been rendered complete by a want of union amongst the Protestant Princes of Germany. The chief of those, whether in reputation, in power, in wisdom, or in cunning, who had remained attached to the Imperial party, under the most trying circumstances, was Maurice, Duke of Saxony, equally conspicuous as a politician and a warrior, and more famous for his prudence than

his good faith. After the battle of Muhlberg, he had taken a share, not very creditable, in persuading the Landgrave to place himself in the power of his arch-enemy, and he had also, by still more ungenerous conduct, obtained possession of the territories of his cousin, the Elector of Saxony. The height of power, however, to which he had aided to raise Charles V., soon gave him alarm; and the unscrupulous use which the Emperor proceeded to make of his authority, shewed him that he must lead the way in reducing it within due bounds.

Unequal to contend alone with the large forces which Charles could bring against him, hopeless of support from the great body of the Electoral Princes, distrusted by the Protestants, and looked upon as a heretic by the Catholics, he was obliged to have recourse to all the resources of a cunning, yet bold and decided mind, in order to conceal his purposes from the object of his schemes, and to recover the confidence of the Protestants without shaking his alliance with the Emperor. Difficult as this task was in itself, it was rendered almost hopeless by circumstances which occurred within a few years after the accession of Henry II. of France. The removal of the General Council of the Church from Trent to Bologna, disappointed the expectations of Charles V., and knowing well that the inspiration under which the prelates assembled in the Italian city would act, was simply that of the Pontiff at the head of the Church, he not only protested against the

translation, declared the Council to be unlawful and schismatical, and rejected its decrees as invalid, but with a strange mixture of fanaticism and tyranny, resembling the spirit sometimes displayed by Henry VIII. of England, he drew up a Rule of Faith to be observed by the Church of Germany, till such time as a more lawfully constituted Council could be assembled. This Rule of Faith, called the Interim, he required, in a despotic tone, the whole of the Imperial dominions to adopt without delay. The acceptance or rejection of such a mandate was a difficult trial for Maurice of Saxony, and raised up a great obstacle to the plans which he had in view. Fresh embarrassments arose in the Diet of Augsburg, but from some of these he even drew advantages, and others he overcame with unparalleled skill and decision. It is true, an apparent vacillation of conduct alarmed the Protestants more and more, and kept them in suspense regarding his conduct; but he found means to soothe and reassure them, without confiding his secret purposes to their keeping, and even contrived to win the favour and affection of some towards whom he was forced to use armed coercion. Thus he compelled the people of his own territories to adopt the Interim, contrary to their own religious opinions; and yet he avowed loudly his attachment to the Protestant faith, and convinced many of the sincerity of his professions. On the other hand, he eagerly seconded every petition and remonstrance to the Emperor regarding the liberation of the Landgrave; but still persuaded Charles of

his unshaken attachment. He took the command of the Imperial troops against Magdeburg, the inhabitants of which, not only refused to receive the Interim, but libelled and abused him personally as an apostate from the Protestant faith, the tool of arbitrary power, and the betrayer of his friends and his country. He besieged the city for several months, defeated all the efforts of the citizens and their allies, and compelled them to surrender; but nevertheless he contrived to win their regard, even while he seemed to be persecuting them; and the same people who, before he attacked them, painted his character in the blackest colours, spontaneously elected him their chief magistrate, not long after he had forced them to capitulate. Many of the views of the Emperor he thwarted and opposed, and yet so profound was his dissimulation, that Charles was not aware of his enmity till he was actually in arms against his authority.

Before he ventured upon that decided step, however, all those cautious and quiet preparations had been made, which his prudent character, and political as well as military experience suggested. While apparently obeying the behests of the Emperor in reducing the city of Magdeburg, he was paving the way for attaching to his own interests, and employing for his own purposes, several of its most gallant defenders. The chief of these was Albert Count Mansfeldt, who had commanded in the place and encouraged the inhabitants in the determined resistance they had made. Another

person, whom he had already gained, was Count Heideck, an officer of much experience, but an open enemy of Charles V. George, brother of the Duke of Mecklenburg, also, an active, eager, and not unskilful prince, who, though attached to the doctrines of the Reformation, had aided in the siege of Magdeburg, and had been taken prisoner by the citizens, was completely gained to his interest, and made his own claims upon a portion of the Duke of Mecklenburg's dominions, a pretext for keeping on foot the greater part of a large body of veteran soldiers, which had been collected both for the defence and the siege of the place. Letting it be understood that he was about, by force of arms, to compel his brother to acknowledge his pretended rights, the Prince of Mecklenburg engaged the various bands as they were dismissed by Maurice; and, while the Saxon troops held themselves prepared in the Duke's own territories to resume their arms at the shortest notice, a powerful army of hardy mercenaries was held together without exciting the slightest suspicion on the part of the Emperor. At the same time Maurice amused Charles with pretended zeal for the reconciliation of the Church; and, while that monarch remained at Inspruck, watching the proceedings of the Council, which had been reassembled at Trent, his adversary carried on secret negotiations with Henry II. of France, who, now freed from the war with England, disembarrassed of the insurrection in his southern provinces, and com-

mitted to actual hostilities against the Emperor, was both able and willing to afford powerful assistance in reducing the exorbitant power of the house of Austria.

The negotiation, however, in the first instance, had nearly been rendered abortive by the resistance of the Constable, who strongly opposed, in the council of the King of France, the acceptance of the offers made to him by Maurice. But Marshal Vielleville, taking up the contrary side of the question, pointed out to Henry the honor and advantage which might be gained by placing himself at the head of the German princes, and succeeded in bringing over the King to his opinion by holding out to him the prospect of obtaining the towns of Thoul, Verdun, Metz, and Strasburg, an inducement which had been suggested by the Count of Nassau, one of the ambassadors sent by the confederates to the court of France.* When the King had once decided, the terms were speedily arranged, and a treaty was signed between Maurice and the King of France, John of Fiennes, bishop of

* There is some difficulty in arriving at the facts of the negotiation, for it is certain that a treaty was signed by Maurice in Germany, on the fifth of October, 1551, having been negotiated by the Bishop of Bayonne with that Prince in person; and yet the Memoirs of Vielleville, which we have every reason to believe afford authentic information, place the first arrival of the ambassadors from the confederate Princes in the same month of the same year, and represent the King of France as indisposed to accept the office of Protector proposed to him.

Bayonne, acting as Henry's secret ambassador. By this instrument it was agreed that the contracting parties should simultaneously declare war against the Emperor; that the King of France should contribute a large sum of money to aid the confederate Princes, and a monthly subsidy to enable them to carry on the war; that he should create a diversion, by attacking Charles on the side of the Rhine; and that no peace should be concluded but with the consent of all. Maurice, on his part, agreed to bring into the field a force of seven thousand horse, and a strong body of infantry; and he stipulated that if it were found necessary to depose Charles V. and elect another Emperor, such a person should be selected as might be agreeable to the King of France. The objects of the contracting parties were stated to be, the preservation of the laws and constitution of the German Empire, and the liberation of the Landgrave; but religious toleration, to ensure which was in reality one of the chief ends of the confederation, was not even mentioned. The document was left open for the signature of such German princes as might afterwards be inclined to join the league; but great care was taken to conceal its existence from the knowledge of the Emperor and his ministers; and with the most artful devices Maurice contrived to blind the watchful eyes that were upon him, and to make the very spies who were entertained in his court, the means of deceiving their employers. Thus, during several months

after the conclusion of the treaty with the King of France, and after the reduction of Magdeburg, Maurice kept his army together in Thuringia, and proceeded calmly to complete all his preparations, without exciting anything but slight and transitory suspicions in the mind of the astute Charles V., or the still more subtle Cardinal Granvelle.

Before he actually took arms, however, he thought fit to make one more application for the liberation of the Landgrave; an application which he was certain would be refused, but the rejection of which would furnish a strong and plausible motive in the eyes of the world for proceeding to the last extremity. The result was such as he expected. The Emperor evaded his petition, although supported by almost all the German princes; and Maurice, feigning that he was about to visit Charles at Inspruck, suddenly turned off from the road, joined his army in Thuringia, and at the head of twenty thousand foot and five thousand horse advanced by rapid marches upon Augsburg. At the same time he published a manifesto, explanatory of his motives for levying war against the head of the Empire; but in this document, which differed greatly in these points from the treaty with Henry, the first cause assigned for his taking arms was that the Protestant religion was threatened with immediate destruction. Two other objects were stated to be held in view by the confederates, the maintenance of the laws of the Empire, and the deliverance of the Landgrave of Hesse. At

the same time another manifesto was published by Henry of France, in which he took the title of Protector of the liberties of Germany and of its captive Princes; and while Maurice marched on from success to success, amusing the astonished Emperor with negotiations till his forces were almost at the gates of Inspruck, the King of France, at the head of a considerable army, took the field at Joinville.

Thoul and Verdun opened their gates at once, and submitted to the French monarch, and Montmorenci obtained possession of the important town of Metz by a stratagem, of which, it is probable, the Imperial governor was, not unwillingly, the dupe. Strasburg, however, refused to give admission to the King; and the mediation of the neighbouring Princes of Germany afforded to Henry a fair excuse for not besieging, in form, a city which, there is much reason to suppose, he might not have been able to subdue. He caused his horses, however, to be led to the brink of the Rhine, and to drink of its waters; and then, turning to Haguenau, he induced, by menaces, the inhabitants to give him entrance. But the town of Spires, in which the Imperial Chamber was sitting, declined to admit him, although he sent Marshal Vielleville to request it as an act of courtesy.*

* The Imperial Chamber, indeed, agreed to receive the King himself within their walls, but would not give the security required, that they would let him go out again; fearing that the fate of Metz might fall upon them, if the French soldiers got possession of one of their gates, which was evidently the object of the King.

While in the neighbourhood of that place, messengers reached Henry from Maurice of Saxony, bearing to him manifold protestations of gratitude and affection, but mingling therewith some gentle remonstrances in regard to the surprise of Metz, and announcing that the German princes had concluded a treaty of peace with the Emperor.*

The events which had brought about the result to which the letters of Maurice alluded, must now be noticed. The successful career of the Duke of Saxony received a check, when the person of Charles himself was almost within his grasp, by the mutiny of a body of his mercenaries. The short delay, occasioned by this commotion in his camp, gave time for the Emperor to hear of his advance upon Inspruck, and to fly in haste from that city. Maurice arrived in the place but a few hours after it had been evacuated by the Imperial court; and, finding that his prey had escaped him, the Duke turned towards Passau, to carry on with Ferdinand, King of the Romans, and a number of ambassadors from the Electors and free cities of Germany, the negotiations for a peace which had already been opened. Difficulties and obstacles presented themselves and retarded for some time the final act of pacification; but Maurice, having resumed hostilities, laid siege to Frankfort on the Maine, and made great progress towards the reduction of that city. The Emperor found himself forced to yield, and

* The Memoirs of Vielleville, who was present with Henry, are precise on all these points.

accordingly assented to such terms as the Protestant princes were not unwilling to accept. The treaty was signed at Passau, and is known by the name of "The Peace of Religion," as by it was ensured to the Protestants the unmolested exercise of their own forms of worship, and security against the intolerance of the Roman Church. Notwithstanding the convention between the confederates and the French King, not the slightest attention was paid to Henry's interests in the negotiations for the peace or in the treaty itself. France was thus left exposed, without allies, to the vengeance of the Emperor; and the first efforts of Charles were directed to the recovery of the towns he had lost.

Already his sister, the Queen of Hungary, was in the field to create a diversion in his favor, by attacking the province of Champagne; and the French monarch, returning towards his own dominions in haste, prepared to oppose her progress. The strong town of Stenay had been taken; and with fifteen thousand infantry, four thousand heavy horse, and two thousand lighter cavalry, her forces were advancing rapidly to the conquest of other places. The approach of the King's army, however, changed the fortune of the campaign; but the operations of his troops were restricted to the capture of several small towns, and some insignificant skirmishes, driving back the enemy by slow degrees into Luxemburg. The country, however, became more and more difficult at every step, continual rains

rendered the roads almost impassable for artillery; and at length, towards the end of July, Henry dispersed his army and retired into France, satisfied with having acquired some important advantages and repelled the enemy from his territory.*

No long period of repose was allowed to the King of France. Though burning to revenge the disgrace he had sustained by the loss of so many strong places, Charles saw the treaty of Passau concluded ere he commenced his march towards the banks of the Rhine, with the troops he had collected to oppose Maurice of Saxony; and in the endeavor to deceive Henry as to his intentions, he succeeded for some time. But it soon became apparent which way his steps were directed; and a strong garrison was thrown into Metz, under the command of Francis of Lorraine, now Duke of Guise in consequence of the death of his father Claude, in 1550.

In the mean time, the Imperial troops, led by the Duke of Alva, passed the Rhine, and presented themselves before Metz on the 19th of October, 1552; and the King of France and the Emperor both turned their eyes towards a large body of licentious soldiery, under the command of Albert of Brandenburg, which hovered near the scene of action, as if undecided on which side to bestow assistance. Both parties eagerly endeavored to gain the adventurous Prince, and vast offers were made to him both by France and Germany. But while

* Vielleville, l. iv.

Henry daily increased his offers, he stationed a corps of his army on the frontiers of Lorraine, headed by the young Duke of Aumale, the brother of the Duke of Guise, with orders to watch the proceedings of Albert, and oppose his progress if he should decide in favor of the Imperialists.

Charles V., however, it would seem, outbid his competitor; Albert of Brandenburg suddenly fell upon the Duke of Aumale, defeated and took him prisoner, and, marching on, joined the army of the Emperor under the walls of Metz. The siege was then prosecuted with great vigor, but the defence was not less resolute. The Duke of Guise, supported by a number of the French nobility, displayed all the qualities of a great commander, met and frustrated the efforts of the Imperial army at all points, and kept the besieging force continually on the alert by frequent sallies, till the Emperor, indignant at the slow progress made, appeared in person to conduct the attack. Neither was Henry inactive; a large body of French troops scoured the neighbouring country, and cut off the supplies of the Imperial camp. Vielleville, and others, surprised several towns between Verdun and Metz; the winter set in with extraordinary severity; an infectious disease broke out in the Emperor's army; and, after having tried both assault and mine, Charles was obliged to raise the siege, and retire before the inclemency of the season and the unconquerable courage of the enemy.

Distressing as was the disgrace to his arms before

Metz, the Emperor's mortification was aggravated by several other misfortunes nearly at the same time. In Italy the French army made considerable progress; the inhabitants of the town of Sienna, which had long been under the protection of the Empire, and which had received a body of Imperial troops, irritated by the discovery of a design against their liberty, and by the excesses of the soldiery, rose against Mendoza the governor, levelled the citadel he was building to the ground, and placed their little republic under the shield of France. Naples also was the scene of distressing events, which need not be farther noticed in this place; and no sooner had the Imperial army raised the siege of Metz, than Albert of Brandenburg carried his licentious bands into Germany, and proceeded on the lawless course in which he had previously gained an evil reputation; troubling the peace of the country, and laying the weak and the timid under contribution.

Nevertheless, the Emperor exerted himself vigorously to take the field early, and to create a diversion in favor of his generals in Italy. Directing his efforts to the side of Flanders, as soon as he could somewhat refresh his exhausted troops, he laid siege to the city of Terouanne, the French garrison of which had long been a scourge to his territories in the neighbourhood. The command in the town had been entrusted to d'Essé Montalembert, whom we have already mentioned in speaking of the wars of Scotland, and with him was joined Francis

of Montmorenci, the eldest son of the Constable; but neither the skill of the one, nor the courage of the other could save the city from the large force brought against it by Charles. D'Essé died sword in hand; Montmorenci was taken; and Terouanne, falling into the hands of the Emperor, was not only dismantled but rased to the ground.

Emanuel Philibert of Savoy, now placed in command of the Imperial forces, and animated by personal enmity to the King of France, who retained possession of great part of his hereditary territories, next led the victorious army to the siege of Hesdin, which was also taken; while Henry and Montmorenci, though at the head of a powerful corps, were amused and deceived both by the citizens at Cambray and the Imperial generals. Thus ended the military operations which took place on the side of Flanders during the year 1553. Little more occurred in Italy, that requires to be noticed in this place; though the French arms were, upon the whole, successful, and the excellent discipline established by Marshal Brissac gained him greater honor than battles won.

In the meantime, the death of Edward VI. of England, the accession of Mary to the throne of that country, and the intrigues which were successfully carried on for the purpose of uniting the English Queen to the son of the Emperor, gave great preponderance to the power of Charles, and filled the court of France with alarm. As soon in the year 1554 as the season, and the custom of the times,

permitted, Henry brought three armies into the field upon his northern frontier, and attacked the troops and the dominions of Charles on the side of Luxembourg, Artois, and Hainault. The Duke of Nevers, entering the Ardennes with one of these corps, drove the enemy from a district whence they could make an easy incursion into Champagne, and then, suddenly turning towards the west, joined the army of the Constable, which had made a demonstration of attacking Avesne. Thus reinforced, Montmorenci advanced rapidly upon Marienbourg, and carried that fortress after a siege of three days.*

The army was then joined by Henry in person, several other towns were taken; and, after founding the city of Rocroi, for the purpose of insuring supplies, the King advanced into Hainault, and ravaged it in the most brutal manner, upon the pretence that the Queen of Hungary, governess of the Low Countries, had committed similar devastations in his territories. Having exhausted the whole resources of the country, and being opposed in front by the Imperial army commanded by the Duke of Savoy, Henry thought fit to retire towards the Boulonnois, and laid siege to the small, but well fortified, town of Renti.

The capture of that place would have completely opened Artois to the French, and so eager was Charles to save it, that, putting himself into a litter, which was the only conveyance he could bear, he assumed the command of his army in person; and,

* Some authors say six days.

taking up an advantageous position in the neighbourhood of the besieged place, he endeavored, with great skill and caution, to frustrate the efforts of the French troops, without risking a general engagement.

Between the houses of Montmorenci and Guise had long existed, as I have shewn, a virulent rivalry at the court of France; and the jealousy of the Constable towards the young Duke, greatly increased by the renown which his competitor had acquired by the defence of Metz, now displayed itself in a way disastrous to his sovereign's arms. Guise eagerly proposed to take the first opportunity of forcing the enemy to a general engagement; Montmorenci opposed his opinions in the council, and shewed himself unwilling to support his operations in the field. At length an attempt made by Charles to obtain possession of an important post, with a view of throwing succour into the place, gave the Duke of Guise the opportunity he desired, and a fierce struggle took place under the walls of Renti, in which the greater part of both armies were engaged. Every one admits that the skill and conduct shewn by the defender of Metz were worthy of the renown he had acquired; and the Imperialists were repulsed after a long and sanguinary combat, in the course of which Gaspard de Coligni, who had by this time succeeded to the important charge of Admiral, displayed the most daring gallantry. The total defeat of the Emperor's army would probably have ensued, but Montmorenci, with slow unwillingness, brought

up the main body which he commanded; and Charles, posting himself as strongly as ever, had the satisfaction of forcing the enemy to raise the siege of Renti, and retire from their fruitless undertaking.

Mortified and disgusted, Henry quitted the head-quarters of his army; and, after dispersing a part of the troops amongst the principal garrisons on the frontier, he left the rest under the command of Anthony of Bourbon, Duke of Vendome, who, with but small forces, no great military skill, and very limited authority, was able to effect nothing beyond preventing the enemy from passing the Somme. The whole of the French territory, however, on the other side of that river, almost up to the gates of Amiens, was ravaged by the Duke of Savoy, who exacted a barbarous retribution for the equally barbarous acts of the French in Hainault.

In Italy, any small advantages which France had gained in the north were more than compensated by the signal defeat which Marshal Strozzi received at the hands of the Marquis of Marignano, and by the capture of Sienna, which, after a siege of many months, was forced to capitulate, by famine, on the 22nd of April, 1555. Montluc, however, who commanded in the place, and who had shewn a degree of vigor and determination which won him the highest honor, refused to suffer the name of the King of France to appear in the capitulation, and marched out with arms and baggage, drums beating, and ensigns displayed, taking with him all those

who, dreading the vengeance of the Emperor and the Duke of Florence, chose to quit the town of Sienna. The Marquis of Marignano himself met the gallant Frenchman as he issued forth, and embraced him with every demonstration of admiration and regard; and thus, though the city was lost, the reputation of the French arms did not suffer. Exhausted resources, a multitude of brave and noble gentlemen destroyed, fertile provinces ravaged, and wealthy cities rased to the ground, were the bitter fruits that France and the Empire reaped from the hostilities in which they had engaged. There has been many a successful war in the world, but seldom —perhaps never—a profitable one when all the costs are counted.

The war in the Low Countries languished, for want of means, after the combat at Renti, confining itself to a series of stratagems on both parts, all of which proved fruitless, except an attack upon Cateau-Cambresis, which the French took by escalade. An attempt upon Metz was frustrated by the vigilance and activity of Vielleville, who also was successful in several skirmishes with the Imperial troops. The course of hostilities in Italy, however, continued far less favorable to France. The Duke of Alva, having taken the command of the Imperial troops, displayed his powerful military genius in opposition to a man as skilful as himself, but whose forces were greatly inferior in point of number. Brissac was, moreover, ill sustained by the court; he had given offence to the powerful family of Guise;

he was not loved, though he was admired, by Montmorenci; the reinforcements which he demanded, and the sums of money necessary to pay his troops, were denied him; and his sole support with the King was the favor of the Duchess of Valentinois, who was suspected, without much cause, of regarding him with somewhat more than friendship. In the midst of his embarrassments, on these accounts, he was attacked by a severe illness at Turin, and obliged, for some time, to confide the conduct of the army to others, whose proceedings, less vigorous than his own, might probably have been attended with reverses, had not considerable reinforcements arrived from France, and enabled the French troops in Piedmont to make themselves masters of one or two places of importance.

That which tended, however, more than even lassitude, to cause the war to languish, was the hope of peace afforded by negotiations which were taking place under the mediation of England. At the urgent request of Mary, plenipotentiaries had been sent by Charles V. and the King of France to the small village of Marq, between Gravelines and Calais. Cardinal Pole, and Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, labored indefatigably in person to reconcile the contending parties; and Pope Julius III., though his own acts had no slight share in producing the first hostilities, now sought anxiously to bring them to a termination. All efforts were vain, however; the pretensions both of the Emperor and the King of France were too extravagant to permit even

of modification; and, with the death of Julius, new intrigues sprang up in Italy, which tended to inflame rather than to appease the war. That Pontiff expired on the twenty-ninth of March, 1555. He was succeeded in the chair of St. Peter by Cardinal Marcello Cervino, a pious and excellent man, of considerable talent, and of more liberal principles, it would appear, than most of his predecessors. Great expectations were entertained of a reform in the Church under his Pontificate; but his early death, which took place within a month after his election, placed the tiara upon the brow of John Peter Caraffa, who assumed the name of Paul IV. He too was a pious and learned man, we are told by the papal historians, of irreproachable life and manners; but he was severe, bigoted, and superstitious, with an excessive and unreasonable attachment to his nephews, a vice not uncommon to the Pontiffs of Rome. To aggrandize them he was ready to make any sacrifices; and to promote their ambitious projects he gave up the character of a Christian pacificator, and added to the existing contentions in Europe. The eyes of his nephews were fixed upon the kingdom of Naples, which was attached to the Imperial dominions by a frail and insecure tenure; and they soon found means so far to irritate their uncle against the Emperor, who had strongly opposed his election, as to induce Paul to open negotiations with the King of France, for the purpose of concluding an offensive and defensive alliance with that monarch; the two principal objects

of which were to conquer the duchy of Tuscany, and to expel the Imperialists from the kingdom of Naples. In the event of success attending the military operations of the contracting parties, the republican form of government was to be restored in Florence, and the Neapolitan territory was to be left to the King of France, as a royal portion for one of his sons, with the exception of a certain part which was to be annexed to the domain of the Church, and a somewhat extensive share with which the nephews of the Pontiff proposed to enrich themselves.

Great differences of opinion arose in the councils of Henry II. regarding the proposals of the Pope; and while Montmorenci, with his usual caution, strongly advised the King not to enter upon such dangerous undertakings, the Duke of Guise, with the spirit of enterprise which characterized all his race, urged the monarch by all means to attempt the conquest of Naples. It is to be remarked, however, that upon that kingdom he himself had some remote claims, which he might, perhaps, expect to render available in the event of a successful war. The idea of such vast operations flattered the vanity and excited the ambition of the French monarch; the prudent counsels of Montmorenci were rejected; the more rash and daring opinion of the Duke of Guise prevailed, and the Cardinal of Lorraine was sent to Rome to negotiate with the Pope, armed with full powers to conclude the treaty. But Paul IV. had in the meantime been shaken in his resolution by the efforts of the Im-

perial ambassador; and it might have been found difficult to bind him to the very proposals he himself had made, had not the manner in which the peace of religion was ratified and carried out by the Diet of Augsburg, exasperated him to the highest degree against the Emperor. His mind was thus inflamed with anger against Charles and the Princes of the Empire, at the moment when the Cardinal of Lorraine arrived at his court, and it was not found difficult to induce him to sign the treaty, though it was agreed that the stipulations should be kept secret till all parties were prepared for carrying the war into the neighboring kingdom. The negotiations, however, and their object, had not been altogether concealed from the Spanish and Imperial court; and the Duke of Alva, now in command at Naples, hastened to assemble large bodies of troops on the frontiers of the Papal dominions, with the apparent intention of striking the first stroke in a war which appeared inevitable.

In the meanwhile, a great and important change had taken place in the distribution of the European states. On the marriage of Philip of Spain with Mary of England, in the preceding year, Charles V. had bestowed upon his son the kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Shortly after he had invested him with the duchy of Milan, and he now gave up to him, on the 25th October, 1555, the sovereignty of the Low Countries, and of the duchy of Burgundy, resigning to him, within a month afterwards, the crown of Spain itself.

It would be out of place in this brief introductory sketch, to investigate the motives which affected the Emperor in the extraordinary act that he now performed. Whether corporeal debility, or satiated ambition, or disappointed expectation, or the growing ascendancy of religious convictions acted upon his mind; certain it is, that in casting from him so great a portion of the vast power which from youth he had sought to extend by every means justifiable and unjustifiable, he endeavored likewise to quench the flame of war, which his own grasping and domineering spirit had aided to kindle. He now shewed himself ready to make great sacrifices for the attainment of a general pacification; and an opportunity was offered for renewing negotiations, by conferences, for an exchange of prisoners, which were going on between French and Imperial commissioners, at the abbey of Vaucelles, of which opening Charles eagerly took advantage. A proposal was made to conclude a truce for five years, each party retaining possession of that which he had obtained during the course of the war.

Nothing could be more favorable to France; the greater part of Piedmont was already in her hands; Metz, Thoul, and Verdun were in her possession, and no obstacle existed, except the treaty with the Pope, which indeed greatly embarrassed the French monarch. The Cardinal of Lorraine, however, one of the great supporters of Paul at the court of France, was absent at Rome. The counsels of

Montmorenci on this occasion prevailed over those of the Duke of Guise, and the King, forgetting his engagement with the Pontiff, agreed to the suggestion of the Imperial Commissioners, and concluded the convention. The Admiral de Coligni, who had the honor of having obtained such advantageous terms for his country, was sent to Brussels to witness the signature of the Emperor and his son; the Count de Lalain on the part of Charles proceeded to Blois, to receive the ratification of the King of France; and the treaty was duly signed by the latter monarch, with no other stipulation in favor of his allies, than that the name of the Pope should be expressly included in the truce. The Emperor treated the Duke of Savoy with even less consideration; and that Prince, as well as the Pontiff, experienced bitterly how little the interests of inferior persons are consulted by great monarchs, either in their wars or their negotiations.

As soon as these events were announced to the Cardinal of Lorraine, he fled from Rome to avoid the indignation of Paul; but that Pontiff, on the present occasion, far from giving way to the natural feelings of anger which possessed him, displayed a degree of diplomatic cunning which no one had expected from his character. Seeing the dangerous position, in regard to Philip of Spain, into which his designs upon Naples had brought him, he dexterously sheltered himself from the storm, by affecting the greatest joy and satisfaction at the conclusion

of the truce. He looked upon it, he said, but as the forerunner of a general and permanent pacification, and he exhorted the monarchs of Christendom, as their common father, to accept of his mediation for the attainment of so desirable an object. With the ostensible purpose of inducing them to comply with this suggestion, he sent his nephew, Cardinal Carrafa, in haste to the court of France, while another Cardinal was directed to proceed with slower steps to Brussels. But the real purpose of Carrafa's mission was very different from its apparent object. He bore with him to Henry a consecrated sword, as the defender of the Church, and secret exhortations to break the truce to which he had lately sworn; he besought him to concentrate all his forces for one grand effort, and, joining his troops to those which the Pontiff had already levied, to carry the kingdom of Naples by one bold and decided attack.

Such is the morality of a religion which entrusts to one frail human being the power of absolving his fellow-men from their most solemn and sacred engagements. Such is the Christian character of a creed which places the temptations of temporal ambition constantly before the spiritual head of the Church.

Henry hesitated, for there were many obstacles before him: his oath, the extreme age of the Pope, the state of preparation of the kingdom of Naples. But Carrafa found means to remove some difficulties,

and to disguise others. From his oath he absolved the King at once; of the age of the Pope he made use, to hold out the prospect of the tiara to the Cardinal of Lorraine; and he represented the power of the Papal and the French troops combined as so great that Alva could offer no efficient resistance. Guise and his brother were ready to second him eagerly; Diana of Poitiers was gained to the same side; and even the Queen herself, now beginning to obtain some influence in the state, was induced to exercise it in favor of the Pontiff's views. Montmorenci was the only one who remained firm; when events occurred which gave additional cogency to the specious arguments of Carrafa, and removed many of the scruples of the King.

Whether they were intentionally brought about by the crooked policy of the Roman See, or occasioned by the impolitic resentment of the King of Spain, or urged on by the harsh and uncompromising character of Alva, will probably remain for ever in darkness; but it is clear that it was the interest of Paul to drive Philip into any rash and hasty act which might give the King of France a fair pretext for breaking the truce he had so lately signed. On the one hand it is stated, and with every appearance of truth, that no sooner had the Pontiff heard of the success of his nephew, at the court of France, than he sent messengers to the nuncio, who was on the way to Brussels, commanding him instantly to pause on his journey, and not to carry on the negotiations for a permanent peace, which

he had been at first instructed to prosecute. At the same time, we are told, he imprisoned the Spanish envoy, persecuted the family of Colonna, and called forth whatever troops the Papal dominions could supply, shewing a determination of carrying war into Naples upon the slightest pretence.

On the other hand, neither Philip nor Alva were of a temper to bear irritation; and it is alleged against them, though upon less certain grounds, that they intrigued with the disaffected barons of Rome, that they received with joy the proscribed subjects of the Pope, and that they instigated resistance to his authority, promising aid to the malcontents in case of need. From violent remonstrances the supreme Pontiff proceeded to excommunicate the offenders at his own court, to cast into severe imprisonment the envoy of Spain, in consequence of some suspicion —real or pretended—that he fomented the troubles of the Roman state; and in the end Paul went so far as to declare Philip in danger of losing the investiture of Naples in consequence of treason against the Holy See.

On looking at the question calmly, it would appear, that the charges brought by the Pope against the Spanish monarch were grounded upon suspicions only, and that they have never been satisfactorily proved, so that some doubt may reasonably exist as to whether those charges had any substantial foundation, or were merely pretexts for the violent conduct that Paul was prepared to pursue. The accusations of Philip against the Pope, however,

were based upon acts open and apparent in the eyes of all Europe ;* and it is also clearly shewn, that the Spanish monarch hesitated long, and entertained many superstitious scruples in regard to declaring war against a prince who combined in his own person temporal and spiritual jurisdiction.

The Duke of Alva demanded that the Spanish envoy should be immediately liberated, offered terms, made proposals, and evidently did all that man could do to avoid the necessity of hostilities, which were odious to his sovereign.

The Pope and his nephews, however, confident in the alliance of the French monarch, rejected every overture; and at length Alva, finding Paul intractable, took the field at the head of ten thousand veteran soldiers, entered the Roman territory, and took city after city, almost without striking a blow. The whole Campagna was overrun in an incredibly short space of time, and the Spanish forces were approaching the gates of Rome, before the intemperate Pontiff was in a state to offer the slightest resistance.

All hesitation had been at an end in France, from the moment that hostilities began on the part of Spain. Philip, as soon as he learned the bad faith of the French King, in his negotiations with

* Muratori says, " Ora fra le molte azioni degne di lode in questo pontefice, non si può già contare, ch' egli in tempo che si trattava seriamente di pace fra i re di Francia e di Spagna, si studiasse di maggiormente accendere la guerra fra essi ; e ciò per odj ed enteressi privati; locchè gli riusci con tanto danno de' sudditi suoi ed altrui."

Paul, suspended the restoration of the prisoners; and, feeling that the truce was in reality little better than a fraud upon the part of France, his officers committed various acts of vengeance upon the Belgian frontier, in regard to which, Henry's ministers, with the usual policy of the Parisian court, addressed loud reproaches to Philip, affecting to be the injured party, when their sovereign was in fact following a most dishonest and disgraceful course towards the Spanish king.

The rapid success of Alva, the long delay of the French succor, the want of funds and of men to defend his territories, speedily drove Paul IV. to apply to the general of Philip's forces, first for a truce of ten days, and then for its renewal for forty more, affecting a desire for peace which he did not feel, while he wearied Henry II. with applications for assistance, and employed the time allowed him in preparing for war.

A large sum of money, and a small body of French troops, soon restored confidence in Rome. The Duke of Guise passed the Alps, obtained some successes in the Milanese, and hurrying on towards the more immediate scene of danger, resigned the nominal command of the army to his father-in-law the Duke of Ferrara, while he retained all the real authority. After which, marching through the Roman territories, he forced Alva to retire before him, and evacuate the ecclesiastical state. No sooner, however, had the Spanish general re-entered the territories of his master, than he took up a strong

position on the frontier, and watched the proceedings of his adversary, without being tempted to risk a general engagement with inferior forces.

Before he advanced into the kingdom of Naples, the Duke of Guise proceeded to Rome, and spent a month in that city amidst fêtes and pageants, publicly urging the Pope to accomplish the promises he had made of bringing a considerable force into the field to act with the French; but negotiating secretly, it is very generally supposed, with the sacred college, in order to insure the tiara to his brother on the death of Paul. Little military assistance did he receive from the Pontiff, or the family of Carrafa; and, obliged to depend upon his own resources, he once more put himself at the head of his troops, and entered the territories of Naples. No glory, however, awaited him in that country. Campli, indeed, was taken, and some horrid excesses were committed, which, instead of striking terror into the Neapolitans, only roused them to more indignant resistance. Civitella was next besieged, and though the force within the walls was small, the strength of the place, the courage and skill of the garrison, and the determination of the inhabitants—the ladies of the city themselves animating the soldiery by their exertions in its defence—rendered the resistance so vigorous, that Guise had the disgrace of seeing himself repulsed from the gates of a third-rate fortress; while the Duke of Alva resisted every temptation to attack the enemy, and left them to consume their strength in fruitless enterprises.

At the same time an epidemic disorder seized upon the French troops, quarrels broke out between Guise and the family of Carrafa,* and, disgusted and indignant, deceived by the Italians, unsupported by the court of France, and opposed by one of the first generals of the age, the Duke saw nothing before him but defeat and disgrace; when events took place in a different part of Europe which delivered him with honor from the difficult situation in which he was placed.

Enraged at the breach of the treaty by France, and anxious to signalise his accession to power by some great and important effort, Philip determined to prosecute the war in the Low Countries with the utmost energy and activity. Before he was prepared for hostilities, indeed, and previous to any formal announcement of their intentions, the French had treacherously attacked Douai, and failing in the enterprise, turned upon the town of Sens, which was taken and sacked with circumstances of considerable aggravation. But although he thus courted hostilities on his northern frontier, Henry II. was by no means in a state to carry them on with vigor. The great body of his forces, the principal nobility, and the chief resources of his treasury had been diverted to Italy; and, though Montmorenci remained to command, and Coligni and D'Andelot to assist in the campaign in the Low Countries, it commenced, on the part of France, with but

* The Memoirs of Vielleville, lib. vii. accuse the Cardinal Carrafa, in plain terms, of having sold the French to the enemy.

small and insignificant advantages and ended in ruin and disgrace.

Philip II., well aware that Henry had exhausted his means to carry on the enterprise against Naples, gathered together in the neighborhood of Givet and Charlemont, all the troops which could be assembled in Belgium, gained the co-operation of England, by his influence over Mary, and obtained an aid of eight thousand men, under the Earl of Pembroke, from his wife's dominions. The large force thus collected was entrusted by Philip to the command of the Duke of Savoy, who had already so greatly distinguished himself in the last compaigns of Charles V.; and to his skilful and stratagetic mind is attributed the brilliant operations by which the war commenced on the part of Spain. The appointment of the rendezvous at Givet, was in itself a stratagem to deceive the enemy in regard to the intended scene of action; and all the first movements of Emanuel Philibert, —especially his demonstration upon the towns of Rocroi and Guise, which had the appearance of menacing Champagne,—were calculated to mislead the French commanders, and induce them to withdraw their best troops from the meditated point of attack.

This plan proved completely successful: Montmorenci was led to withdraw the forces which were necessary for the defence of Picardy from that part of the country, and pour them into Champagne;

while the Duke of Savoy, watching their movement, and acting upon a smaller circle while they were compelled to describe a larger one, took advantage of their absence, and sending on his cavalry in haste, as soon as he saw that his stratagem was successful, invested the city of St. Quentin. This town had undoubtedly, from the first, been the place which he intended to attack. Its proximity to Paris, the want of any fortified places between it and the capital of France, the decayed state of its defences, and the fact of its being considered, in those times, the key to Picardy, rendered the enterprise, to all appearance, both desirable and easy. A large portion of the garrison had been withdrawn to swell the forces in Champagne; the governor, an inferior officer of the name of Breuil, a gentleman of spirit and resolution, but of no great military skill, had scarcely soldiers enough at his command to man the walls, and the place must inevitably have fallen in a few days, had it not been saved, for the time, by the gallant determination of the Admiral de Coligni, who, as governor of Picardy, conceived his honor implicated in the defence of the town. He had accompanied his uncle the Constable, and Marshal St. André, to Pierrepont, and in a council which was held there, towards the end of July, he had strongly expressed his opinion that the movements of the Duke of Savoy were intended merely to deceive. As soon as the accuracy of these views was shewn by the attack on St. Quentin, he marched

with a strong body of troops for that town, and passing by la Fére and Ham, approached the besieged city with full information regarding the position of the enemy. The dangers and difficulties of the undertaking alarmed a part of his troops, and caused them to desert him on the road, and others lost their way before they reached Ham; but Coligni persisted in the attempt; and, guided by an officer of the name of Faulperghe, he threw himself into St. Quentin in the middle of the night, though not without considerable loss.

The Admiral found the inhabitants and the garrison in a state of the greatest consternation, and one of the suburbs already in the hands of the enemy; but his presence restored confidence, and his skill soon enabled the place to assume a more defensible aspect. The suburb was retaken, the stores and ammunition were placed in security, and the distribution thereof was regulated so as to guard against waste; all those who could be of no use in the defence of the city were sent away, and the Duke of Savoy found that instead of reducing the place in a few days, a siege of many months was before him.

In the meantime the Constable hastened to support his nephew in the defence of St. Quentin, and advanced with an army as far as la Fére, whence he detached D'Andelot for the purpose of throwing succour into the besieged town. D'Andelot, however, betrayed by his guides and totally defeated, had nearly fallen a prisoner into the enemy's hands.

A second attempt, for the same purpose, was made soon after, under cover of an attack upon the Spanish camp, conducted by Montmorenci in person. The Duke of Savoy was taken by surprise, and, in the confusion which ensued, D'Andelot, with about five hundred chosen men, forced his way into the city across a marsh.

But this effort for the assistance of Coligni brought on one of the greatest disasters which France had ever sustained. Recovering from the disorder into which the sudden appearance of the Constable and his brisk attack upon the camp had occasioned, the Duke of Savoy instantly perceived the error which his antagonist had committed, and prepared to take advantage of the situation into which he had brought himself. Surrounded by marshes and defiles, the retreat of the French army, before a superior enemy, was scarcely possible without great loss, and could only be accomplished by that union of rapid and decided movements with the most complete order and discipline, which was scarcely to be expected from troops, many of whom were freshly levied. Age, too, had rendered the Constable slow, and the pride of success, as well as his natural disposition, made him obstinate. His advance had been contrary to the opinion of St. André and the most skilful officers in the army; the inferior soldiers themselves saw the great danger of the step which had been taken; and an intimation, which was sent by the Prince de Condé, that the enemy's cavalry were forming in his rear, was treated with contempt by

the headstrong though experienced commander, who wasted the minutes that were necessary for the salvation of his forces in slow and unnecessary operations. At the same time the baggage was mixed up with the line, embarrassing the troops; and a large body of cavalry, under the Duke of Nevers, had such strict orders on no account to engage the enemy, that the only opportunity of fighting to advantage, before the Spanish troops were fully prepared, was lost to the French.

A ford, with some strong defiles beyond it, was guarded by the Rhinegrave, with a body of German cavalry in the pay of France, and it was at this point that the battle began. Count Egmont, commanding the Duke of Savoy's horse, was directed to advance and force that post, while the Duke himself prepared, with the utmost expedition, to bring up the infantry and artillery to support him. When it was too late the Duke of Nevers received orders to hasten to the assistance of the Rhinegrave; but before he arrived, Count Egmont was in possession of the pass, and Nevers dared not violate the strict orders of the Constable, even for the purpose of recovering the ground lost.

Montmorenci, in the meantime, continued his retreat towards la Fére, at a slow pace and in firm array; but Philip's cavalry was now in force upon his flank; the camp followers, charged by some parties of the enemy, took fright and carried confusion into the Constable's squadrons. The want

of confidence in their general, and alarm at the position into which he had led them, produced a panic which spread even to the veteran men at arms, and a vigorous charge made by Egmont at the head of his whole cavalry, put the French horse instantly to flight. The foot, however, with Montmorenci at their head, marched on unbroken, till at length the advance of the Duke of Savoy, with his infantry and artillery, rendered retreat impracticable. The cannon from a height opened a fierce fire into the heart of the French battalions, and in an instant all was disarray and confusion. Montmorenci, and the French gentlemen who were with him, fought with the courage of despair. The Duke d'Enghein was killed on the spot; and the Constable himself, seeking the same fate, was severely wounded, and only saved from the hands of the Flemish soldiers by some officers to whom he was personally known. With him were taken Marshal St. André, the Duke of Montpensier, the Duke of Longueville, and three hundred other distinguished officers and gentlemen. The number of slain is estimated at from four* to eight† thousand; and the baggage, standards, and artillery of the French—with the exception of two pieces of cannon, saved by a gallant officer of the name of Bourdillon—ornamented the triumph of the enemy. Six hundred men of note fell in the fight, and so complete was the dispersion of the Constable's army, so difficult the

* Vie de Coligni. † Anquetil.

position of the French monarch, that when Charles V. heard of the victory which had been achieved, his first question was, "Is my son at Paris?"

In those times, however, it rarely, if ever, happened, that the fruits of a victory were fully reaped by the conqueror. The art of taking advantage of success was the branch of military science with which the great commanders of the middle ages were least acquainted; and in this case, as in others, the opportunity was lost. But a small body of troops would have been necessary to hold in check the feeble garrison of St. Quentin. The army of the Duke of Savoy was numerous, and the battle had been far from dearly gained by the Spaniards, not more than eighty men having fallen on their side. Trouble and consternation reigned in France—confidence and rejoicing spread through the Spanish camp; and there can be but little doubt, that had Philip's forces marched on in the moment of victory, the French capital would have been at their mercy. The system of warfare of those times, however, required that Emanuel Philibert should reduce St. Quentin before he made any other attempt; and time was given for the French King to rally his troops, to restore order and confidence in his capital, to recall the Duke of Guise from Italy, and to prepare his subjects for resistance to the knife; while Coligni set the example, by the desperate opposition to the enemy which he displayed within the walls of St. Quentin.

The arrival of Philip in his camp, by no means accelerated the proceedings, or gave vigor to the counsels of the Spanish commanders. The opportunity of attacking Paris itself was so tempting that it was strongly urged upon the attention of the King; but he hesitated till it was too late to profit by the advice he received. In the meantime the siege of St. Quentin languished, and Coligni was enabled to reassure the garrison and the inhabitants, and to prove to them the absolute necessity of defending the city to the last, in order to give time for new levies to be made, and for the dispersed forces of the Constable to reassemble. Nor were endeavors wanting on the part of the French commanders to throw succor into the place, notwithstanding the disastrous reverse which had attended the last attempt. The Duke of Nevers, posted at la Fére, made a gallant effort to introduce three hundred arquebusiers into St. Quentin, but their approach was discovered by the enemy, and they were nearly all cut to pieces. About a hundred and twenty indeed, forced their way to the town, sword in hand, and proved of some assistance, as the object of the Admiral was solely to protract the defence to the last moment. But it was impossible to hold out long: a continual cannonade was kept up against the walls; practicable breaches were effected; and at length, during a general assault, in which one of the towers was carried, Coligni himself was obliged to surrender to a Spanish soldier, named Francisco Diaz, who led him to the Duke of Savoy.

The town was then forced, and a good deal of slaughter took place, but on the Duke's entrance he caused the massacre to cease, and order to be restored, though the pillage still continued for several hours.

St. Quentin fell on the twenty-seventh day of August, 1557, seventeen days after the fatal battle in which Montmorenci was taken.* That short period, however, was enough to preclude Philip from every chance of making himself master of the enemy's capital. Fresh levies took place, as I have said, in France; a body of Swiss was engaged to supply the place of the troops which fell at St. Quentin; the fugitives from the army, and from the garrison, rallied round the Duke of Nevers, and soon amounted to a formidable force; and, while the French army was hastily recalled from Piedmont, the Duke of Guise began his march from the kingdom of Naples, and the Scots were instigated to attack the English frontier, in order to withdraw the British auxiliaries from the camp of Philip. At the same time, the army of the Spanish monarch daily decreased; frequent desertions took place; large bodies decamped with the plunder they had gained; and even the spirit of the generals was damped, and their exertions cooled, by finding that the bigoted prince whom they served, at the very

* I know not on what authority Anquetil fixes the battle of St. Quentin on the eighteenth of the month of August. The "Life of Coligni," and every respectable authority of the times place it on the tenth of that month.

first overture from the supreme Pontiff, was ready to forget the insults and injuries he had received, and to enter into a disgraceful peace in Italy, leaving the whole power of France to be employed against the Low Countries. The towns of Ham, Noyon, and la Chatelet, were the only fruits of the great successes gained under the walls of St. Quentin, and the Palace of the Escurial is all that remains to Spain, as a memorial of the victory which might have raised her to the highest rank amongst the powers of Europe.

In the meanwhile, in Italy, Paul IV., abandoned by France, surrounded by enemies, and frustrated in his attempts upon the kingdom of Naples, treated in the tone of a conqueror with the Duke of Alva, and assumed, with the rest of the world, the air of a pacificator, as soon as the war which he had wantonly kindled, became inconvenient to himself. Nor does it seem, that his pretences were exposed, or his claims resisted, even by the princes, whose best interest it was to shew his conduct in its true light, and to make him bear the consequences of his own acts. The Duke of Alva, on the part of Philip, met the Cardinals of Santafiora and Vitelli at Cavi, and amongst other extraordinary concessions, agreed to restore all the towns he had taken in the territories of the Church, to visit Rome as a penitent, and ask pardon and absolution for having dared to invade the ecclesiastical states. Besides these stipulations, it was arranged by treaty, that the claims of the Carrafa

family to Palliano, and other states belonging to the family of Colonna, should remain in doubt, till decided upon by the Venetians, as arbitrators. The name of the Duke of Ferrara was altogether omitted in the treaty; but Philip, anxious to detach as many partisans as possible, from the cause of France, restored the town of Placentia and its rich territory, to Octavio Farnese, who had been robbed of it by Charles V. exactly ten years before; and Cosmo di Medicis, taking advantage of Philip's anxiety to terminate a war, which his bigotry taught him to look upon as sacrilegious, obtained from him the investiture of Sienna, by affecting to negotiate through the Pope, with Henry II. The only concession made by Paul, was the renunciation of his offensive league with France; and the terms which he obtained, to use the words of Muratori, "were so honorable to his dignity, that many people were stupified therewith."

With feelings, it would appear, both of contempt and surprise, the Duke of Guise left Rome as soon as this treaty was concluded; and, refusing to take advantage of an article by which it was stipulated, that a free course was to be given to his army through the Italian states of the Catholic King, he sent his infantry by sea, to France, and left his cavalry to find their way back by whatever roads were open to them. Thus ended his famous expedition to the kingdom of Naples, in urging which upon Henry, he had listened more to the voice of his

own ambition, than to zeal for his sovereign's interests. Disappointed in his hopes, and frustrated in his efforts, he returned to France even in a prouder position than that in which he had left it; for the faults and misfortunes of others had so completely eclipsed his own, that his failure in Italy was no longer remembered, and his triumph at Metz was dwelt upon by the hopes and expectations of all men.

Although Henry had shewn energy and activity in preparing to resist the enemy after the fatal battle of St. Quentin, his conscious weakness and the terrors which he felt, displayed themselves somewhat too openly in the exuberant joy which he exhibited on the arrival of the Duke of Guise, and in the honors and rewards which he bestowed upon a man whose recent actions had in no degree deserved recompense, or merited confidence. The Parliament vied with the King in testifying respect for the Duke and satisfaction at his return; and the extraordinary step was taken of naming him Lieutenant-General of the armies of the King, at home and abroad. The dignity was conferred on him by letters-patent, verified by all the parliaments in the kingdom; and we are even assured, that the friends and partisans of the house of Lorraine carried their intention of profiting by the consternation of the moment to such a pitch, as to propose that he should be named Viceroy.* Such

* Auvigny, tome x.

a suggestion should have shewn to Henry the madness of his own course, and the ambition of the family which he was raising to such dangerous pre-eminence; nor was there, indeed, the slightest motive or excuse for this prodigality of power. The interest, the ambition, the pride of the Duke of Guise, would all have combined to make him exert himself to the very utmost in the defence of the kingdom, without rewards and honors which he had, as yet, not merited; and to bestow upon him the highest station which a king could give, was, in fact, to deprive him of some of those inducements which would naturally lead to fresh efforts to serve his sovereign, and to advance himself. The result of such profusion of bounty will be apparent hereafter, when it is seen that Guise, having attained the utmost height of lawful power, naturally directed his efforts to less legitimate objects.

For the time, indeed, the Duke strove to prove to the people of France, that the authority and the dignity he had obtained were not greater than his merits; and he instantly took advantage of the war with England, to attempt the recovery of a portion of the French territory, which had been lost some centuries before and to wipe out a disgrace which had seemed indelible. Instead of turning his arms to the recapture of St. Quentin, or conducting the French forces to repel the enemy from the quarter in which the greatest danger had appeared to exist, he treated their proximity to Paris as a matter of no consequence to the nation, now that he had come

to defend the country; and, affecting to lead the troops of France, as the conquerors, rather than the conquered, to new and brilliant enterprises, he commenced his march in the midst of winter, and, after a few well conceived movements to deceive the enemy, planned upon the model of those of the Duke of Savoy, he turned suddenly upon Calais, and invested that city by land, while a great number of French vessels from the coasts of Normandy and Britanny cut off the communication with England by sea, and, for the time, rendered the blockade complete.

There is much reason to suppose, indeed, that the plan of his operations, the idea of attacking Calais in the winter, the information which had been obtained regarding the defences, and every particular necessary for his guidance, had been furnished by papers from the hand of the Admiral de Coligni, who, as governor of Picardy, had long before proposed the enterprise to the King.* Guise, however, gained the whole credit of the undertaking; and certainly, no light honor was won, after every deduction, by the vigor and skill with which he pressed the siege, from the first of January, 1558, on which he sat down before the walls, to the eighth of the same month, when the place surrendered.

So sudden and unexpected had been the attack, that the English governor of the town had neither men nor provisions sufficient for its defence. It had long been customary to withdraw from Calais

* Auvigny, tome xiv.

during the winter a large part of the garrison, trusting to the inundated state of the neighboring country for protection; but when England took part with Philip in the war against France, Lord Wentworth, the governor, and the King of Spain himself, represented strongly to Mary and her council, that the important city, of which England had so long retained possession, could offer no adequate defence in case of attack, with a feeble garrison of five hundred men. But the English Queen and her counsellors were deaf to all remonstrances; and the latter are said to have replied with contempt to the application of Lord Wentworth,—that, if Calais were attacked during the winter, they would defend it with their white rods. The result of this rash confidence was the loss of the place, after it had remained in the possession of England during two hundred and ten years. The town of Guisnes and the fortress of Hames* fell one after another, with scarcely a stroke struck in their defence, and in the course of a few days, the English crown, which, at one time, either by conquest or inheritance, ruled through nearly one half of the French territories, was deprived of the last foot of ground which it possessed on the continent. The next attempt of Guise was upon the town of Thionville, which had long proved itself a dangerous enemy to Metz; but in this case also the

* I believe the final letters *es* are cut off from this word by modern writers, but I find it so written by contemporary authors, and have retained that orthography, as it serves to distinguish this place from Ham in the neighborhood of St. Quentin.

project had been conceived, and the plan of the attack laid out by another, while he reaped the honor and the reward.* Marshal Vielleville, who had suggested the enterprise, and who, for the purpose of carrying it into execution, had been appointed Lieutenant-General in Champagne, Lorraine, and the duchy of Luxembourg, was on the very eve of commencing the siege of Thionville, when he received a letter from the Duke of Guise, so significant of the grasping and ambitious disposition of that prince, and so open in the display of the motives which actuated him, that I must pause to give a literal translation, in order that the reader may clearly comprehend the character of a man whose efforts for dominion had so great an influence upon France. The words, as given in the Memoirs of the Marshal, are as follows:—

"Monsieur de Vielleville, Having heard that you have a fine enterprise upon your hands, I despatch in haste Captain la Salle, to beg you not to commence the execution in any way without my having joined you; for having brought Calais, Guisnes, and the county of Oye to reason, as Lieutenant-General of his Majesty in this kingdom, and in all territories obeying him, as well on one side of the Alps as the other, I should be very much vexed that anything of honor and importance should be executed without my being present, which would indeed be derogating from my power, and rendering it vile and useless, as you cannot be ignorant, his Majesty

* Memoirs de Vielleville.

having thus honored me as soon as I entered France on my return from my journey to Italy. Thus, I pray you, Monsieur de Vielleville, to wait for me, and to undertake nothing farther. Doubting, also, that you have sufficient French forces to be always master of the foreigners, I bring you four hundred men at arms, five hundred light horse, and a thousand horse arquebusiers, which I cause to advance with the longest marches possible, as will be told you by Captain la Salle, who saw me on the road before he set out. Postponing the rest, and, above all, requiring you to wait for me, I will not write you a longer letter, but pray God to have you in his charge. Your entirely best friend,

"FRANCIS."

The mortification which Vielleville received was very great, especially as he had calculated upon taking Thionville by surprise, and then marching upon Luxembourg; and perhaps the natural feeling of jealousy and impatience which he experienced may have induced him in his Memoirs to attribute the failure of the first attempt upon the town to the obstinacy of the Duke of Guise and Marshal Strozzi, in opposing the plan of attack, which his better knowledge of the place suggested. On the sixteenth day of the siege, however, as the Duke of Guise was leaning on Strozzi's shoulder, the latter received his death wound, and expired a few moments after, blaspheming, in a fearful manner, and in his last hour expressing the atheistical opinions which were not uncommon amongst the

Florentines at that period. The course of the siege was then changed, the plans of Vielleville adopted; and, on the seventh day after this alteration, the town capitulated, and the French troops entered the place. The delay which had taken place in waiting for the Duke of Guise, rendered the farther operations of the French army in Luxembourg unfruitful. Arlon indeed was abandoned by the inhabitants, who set fire to the town before quitting it, and the part which the flames left standing was demolished by the enemy.

A demonstration was then made upon the city of Luxembourg, and much time was lost, while the Duke of Guise neglected, it would seem, frequent calls to the Flemish frontier, where the famous de Thermes was opposed to an army far superior to his own, and in hourly danger of being forced to an unequal engagement, or compelled to quit the field before the enemy. The first operations of that general, indeed, were successful; he took Dunkirk by storm, and threatened the town of Nieuport; but soon after, hearing of the advance of Count Egmont, he sent messengers to the court begging eagerly for support, while he himself commenced his retreat towards the French territories. No aid, however, arrived; the Flemish troops came up with him in the neighborhood of Gravelines, and taking up his position between the river Aa and the sea, with his right wing resting on the river, he prepared to encounter the attack of Philip's troops with the vigor and determination which are generally inspired by the

want of all means of retreat. On this occasion a desperate resistance was made by the French army, and although the Flemings were greatly superior in number, the battle was by no means decided, when several English vessels, accidentally hearing the cannonade, entered the mouth of the Aa, and opened a destructive fire upon the right wing of de Thermes. Confusion and disaster immediately followed; the Flemings took advantage of the unexpected assistance they had received, and the position of the French general was forced at all points. The rout was complete, two thousand men were killed upon the field of battle, and a great number were slaughtered by the peasantry, on whom the French had inflicted the basest and most ungenerous cruelties during their passage through the country. An immense number of officers and gentlemen were made prisoners by the Flemings, amongst whom was de Thermes himself;* and the Duke of Guise hastened towards Picardy to remedy a disaster which the general voice of fame declared he might have prevented,† had he not been unwilling to see any other general lead the French armies successfully, or take so important a town as Dunkirk without suffering some reverse.

Satisfied with having monopolized the whole glory of the campaign, Guise made no movement of importance to retrieve the defeat of Gravelines, although the exertions of Henry soon placed him at the head of forty thousand men. The King, indeed,

* Thuan, lib. xxii. † Auvigny, tome x.

joined him not long after he had taken the command; and Philip advanced to the head-quarters of his own forces to inspire them with courage and determination. But the presence of the monarchs—as might naturally be expected from the appearance on the scene of action of two men, neither famous for military skill, nor for decision of character—retarded rather than accelerated all the operations of their generals, and days and weeks were wasted by the adverse armies in observing each other, without striking a single stroke of any importance.

In truth, each King was as desirous of peace as the other, and each probably divined the views of his fellow monarch, but unforeseen circumstances hastened the conclusion of the war.

When contemplating any portion of the world's history it is very difficult for the narrow discrimination of human beings to decide with anything like an approximation to truth, how much of a given result is to be ascribed to the forethought and premeditated actions of men, how much to that concurrence of circumstances which we are inclined to call accident, but which, upon a more just and extended view of cause and effect, must be attributed to the superintending providence of God. In the present instance a thousand small events combined to bring about an object vehemently desired by the people and the King of France; but dreaded by the family of Guise, who saw therein the return of a rival and a diminution of their power. The pride and arrogance of the two brothers, the Duke and the Cardinal, had

disgusted every one but their immediate dependants; and amongst others had alienated the personage by whose great and unshaken influence they had obtained many of the most important steps in their course of successful ambition.

Their presumption was so great that all who dared took a pleasure in mortifying them. Not long before, the Duke of Vendome, first prince of the blood, finding the Duke of Guise place himself upon an equality with him in a procession, and allege Henry's commands for so doing, had at first retired in indignation, but after a moment resumed his place, better advised, and informed his insolent rival, that if it were the King's pleasure to make his lackey walk beside him, he would submit, not to give pain to his sovereign. Diana of Poitiers, even while serving the views of the Cardinal of Lorraine, lost no opportunity of annoying him, and never deigned to call him by any other name than "*Maitre Charles.*" But the house of Guise had now risen to such a height that its members ventured to spurn the person whose hand had aided them to rise. They abandoned the Duchess of Valentinois, and endeavored to depress her by supporting the party of the Queen; but Diana's influence was as great as ever over the mind of the King, and Henry himself had learned that, in his alarm at the progress of the Spanish arms, he had entrusted too much power to a subject, for a subject to use with moderation.

In the meantime Montmorenci reappeared for a short period at the court of France on parole; and, if his imprudence and defeat had ever shaken the King's confidence in him, he now found that the overbearing temper of the family of Lorraine had wrought powerfully in his favor. He returned punctually to his prison on the day appointed, satisfied that he had gained rather than lost by his absence from the court. It was now no longer the support of the King alone which he possessed, but that of the only person who had ever shared the monarch's affection in an equal degree with himself. An alliance proposed between his own family and that of the Duchess of Valentinois, in the persons of his son and her granddaughter, offered the means of uniting their interests together by an indissoluble bond; and some contemptuous expressions, in which the Cardinal of Lorraine permitted himself to indulge regarding the mistress of the King, enlisted the strong passions of an offended woman on the side of Montmorenci.

So great was the ascendancy which he had now obtained over the mind of Henry, that the monarch condescended to act as the Constable's spy in his own court, to inform him privately of all that took place, of the secret proceedings of his enemies against him, and of the means of frustrating their views. Joint letters, some of which still remain in the Royal Library of France, were written by the King and the Duchess, and signed "*Your old and best friends, Diana and Henry,*" exhorting him to agree to any

ransom which was demanded for his liberation, and holding out the assurance that the King's favors would compensate for the sacrifice whatever might be its amount. Not even the marriage of the Dauphin Francis, which took place in 1558, with Mary Stuart, the niece of the Duke of Guise, had any effect in attaching the King more strongly to that arrogant family; and there can be very little doubt that Henry perfectly comprehended the insincere policy of the Cardinal of Lorraine, who, while affecting to treat for peace, in order to gratify the King and relieve the country, maintained such a tone towards the envoys of Philip, that the attainment of the object was impossible. In this difficulty Henry employed Montmorenci and Marshal St. André, both prisoners in the hands of the King of Spain, to negotiate the terms of pacification, notwithstanding violent opposition on the part of the princes of Lorraine. The latter urged the reasonable motives which certainly did exist for not entrusting powers of such importance to persons, all whose interests biassed them to make too great concessions; but they pressed these considerations in so haughty and overbearing a manner as to deprive them of all benefit from the justice of their arguments. Several events occurred to complicate the negotiations. The death of Mary of England, the accession of Elizabeth, some reverses which attended the arms of France in Piedmont, all operated, at different periods, to change the ground on which the various parties treated; and innumerable intrigues,

too long and insignificant to be noticed in detail, protracted the conferences and frequently rendered the result uncertain.

Permanent causes, however, still operated to bring about a peace. If, on the one hand, the Duke of Guise, studious alone of his military glory, strongly opposed the final termination of hostilities between France and Spain, the great general of Philip, on the contrary, was naturally anxious for the conclusion of a treaty by which he did not doubt that his own territories, so long occupied by France, would be immediately restored. Every consideration rendered Montmorenci and St. André eager for an event which would give them back to liberty, and by relieving the French people, afford such a claim to gratitude as might wipe out the memory of the disaster at St. Quentin. Philip was himself desirous of peace. Elizabeth of England was also inclined to confer that blessing upon her people, if it could be done with honor; and she soon perceived that, on account of her attachment to the Protestant faith, she could expect but little vigorous support from the bigoted King of Spain, in her application for the restitution of Calais.

The remonstrances of the Guises on the one hand, and the political skill of Cardinal Granvelle on the other, prevented those extravagant concessions from being made on either side, which the weakness or interests of some of the parties might have induced them to grant. But upon the whole it is evident that the anxiety of Montmorenci rendered the treaty,

which was finally settled at Cateau-Cambresis, less advantageous to France than to Spain. Calais, indeed, was left in the hands of France, nominally, for eight years; but with stipulations which, few could doubt, would convey it permanently to the French crown; and thus ended the war with England, for the other articles of the treaty between Henry and Elizabeth are but of little importance. Between France and Spain it was agreed that all towns and territories, which had been acquired by either party since the commencement of the war should be restored, with the exception of Thoul, Metz and Verdun, that Henry should evacuate the territories of the Duke of Tuscany, should give up Montserrat to the Duke of Mantua, and resign the towns which he had taken in Corsica to the Genoese, abandoning various rights, which he claimed in Naples, Genoa, and the Milanese. It was stipulated also that Elizabeth, the eldest daughter of the King, whose hand had been offered to Don Carlos, the son of the King of Spain, should be married to Philip himself, now become a widower. Claude, his second daughter, was contracted to the young Duke of Lorraine, but the Princess Margaret, his sister, was promised to Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, who was to receive with her hand, the restitution of all his territories, with the exception of the towns of Turin, Pignerol, Guiers, Chivaz, and Villanova, to which Henry put forward claims, in right of his grandmother, Louisa of Savoy, which claims were left to be decided according to law. All the allies of each of

the monarchs were included in the act of pacification, and the whole of Europe rejoiced, except that part of the French people which was attached to the house of Guise.

After a time, however, the whole of France began to recover from the intoxication of joy at the return of peace, and to inquire whether the King had not been deceived, and the country betrayed by those who had given up one hundred and eighty-nine fortified places in Italy and the Low Countries, in return for the restoration of St. Quentin, Ham, and le Catelet, and the acquisition of Calais, Thoul, Metz, and Verdun. Indignation then succeeded to rejoicing, and France looked upon her glory as tarnished by the concessions she had made.

Posterity, however, sees the matter in a calmer light, and judges that, to France, although some farther advantages might have been wrung from Philip, the consolidation of her territory, by the acquisition of a number of important towns upon her immediate frontier, and within the natural limits of the kingdom itself, the security of Champagne and the districts bordering on the Rhone, and the permanent expulsion of the English from the French soil, with possession of the important port of Calais, did really form a far higher political object, than the retention of a number of places scattered at wide distances over the face of Europe, easy to be attacked, difficult and expensive to defend, points of weakness rather than of strength, seeds of future wars, and subjects of constant anxiety and care.

The return of Montmorenci to the court was hailed with joy by the King and Diana of Poitiers. But before I notice the proceedings which took place in France for the accomplishment of the terms agreed upon, it may be necessary to take a review of several other events which I have omitted to mention in following the course of military operations and treating of the external policy of Henry's reign.

It happened, unfortunately for the Protestants of France, that the leaders of all the great parties into which the court divided itself on the monarch's accession, were equally bigoted to the Roman Catholic religion. The Cardinal de Tournon, indeed, no longer possessed that influence which he had used unscrupulously under Francis I., to repress the spirit of innovation, which he had found rapidly extending. It is probable also that the house of Guise rather employed religion as a pretext, than acted upon it as a motive; nevertheless, as those who affect a zeal in any cause, generally display greater vehemence in its support, than those who really feel that zeal, the Protestants had as little to hope from the family of Lorraine, as from Montmorenci, who shewed himself throughout life fanatically attached to the Roman Church. Persecution still continued in its various forms; edict after edict was pronounced by the Parliament, for the suppression of heresy, and execution after execution filled France with bloodshed and lamentation. Still, day by day, the Reformed religion gained proselytes in the highest ranks of society; and while Henry

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himself was forcing the Roman Catholic doctrines upon many of his unwilling subjects, he was daily, in his quarrels with the Popes, opposing and resisting the corruption and venality of the hierarchy of Rome. Though his severity towards his Protestant subjects was in no degree diminished, amongst the hundred and thirty judges, of which the Parliament of Paris was composed, there were several supposed to be attached to the Lutheran doctrines, many more who favored the Protestants upon the general principle of toleration, and many who could not bring themselves to order the execution of laws the most sanguinary and tyrannical. By the favor of the Parliament, a great number of the Calvinists escaped from the hands of their enemies, appealing from the ecclesiastical courts to the courts of law, which, by a gentle interpretation of the edicts against them, left the door open to mercy.

The Pope, however, remonstrated with the King; the family of Guise endeavored to distinguish itself in the cause of persecution; Diana of Poitiers, who profited by the confiscation of heretical property, added her voice, and the royal consent was given to the introduction of an Inquisitor into France. But the bishops of the Gallican church did not choose to see the right of condemning the Protestants taken from their own courts; and they proposed, in order to satisfy their own bigotry and that of the King, while they guarded against the erection of a new tribunal, to give the ecclesiastical judges the power of deciding in all spiritual cases without appeal, and

leaving to the civil courts only, the task of executing the sentence which they had pronounced. The Parliament, however, nobly interfered in the true spirit of toleration; and the Advocate-general, Séguier, pronounced a magnificent oration in presence of the King and his council, against the dangerous, unjust and tyrannical measures proposed. He stigmatized the Inquisition as a tribunal of blood, where accusation took the place of proof, where no judicial form was respected, and where the accused was deprived of all natural means of defence; and, addressing the monarch in a bold strain of eloquence, he exclaimed, "Begin, Sire, by giving the nation an edict which will not cover your kingdom with funeral piles, which will not be blotted by the tears or the blood of your subjects." He then went on to point out the various evils and dangers with which the state was threatened, bringing his argument home to those who heard him, by shewing that if such innovations took place in established institutions, no man would be safe, and the greater his wealth, and the higher his station, the more imminent would be his peril, when it only required an inquisitor and two witnesses to procure confiscation and death. "With these against you," he exclaimed, addressing the council, "were you saints, you would be burned for heretics."

So powerful did this remonstrance prove, that the King promised to cause the affair to be examined anew, and from that time, 1555, the idea of introducing the Inquisition slumbered until 1558, when

the frequent intervention of the Parliament in favor of the Protestants, induced Henry to publish an edict authorizing the establishment of that odious and guilty tribunal.

Still the Parliament resisted, and to a certain degree, successfully, declining to register the decree without considerable modifications. In the end the clergy alone were declared subject to the new court, which was pronounced independent of the Pope, and placed immediately under the inspection of the bishops of France.

But an incident occurred about this time, which shewed what a dangerous instrument religious intolerance might prove in the hands of political enmity. The famous D'Andelot, who had become colonel-general of the French infantry, had made his escape after the fall of St. Quentin, from the hands of the enemy, and while his brother the Admiral de Coligni, and his uncle the Constable, remained prisoners in Flanders, he acted as the head of their party at the court of France. D'Andelot, however, as well as his brother, had embraced the Protestant faith. Coligni, content to follow his own religious opinions in private, had pursued his course without drawing much attention to his want of reverence for the Church of Rome. D'Andelot, on the contrary, frank, and impetuous, professed openly the convictions that he entertained; and, in the struggle between the houses of Guise and Montmorenci, the Cardinal of Lorraine took advantage of his imprudence to ruin him with the King.

During a short visit which he made in 1558, to his estates in Britanny, D'Andelot was accompanied by a well known Protestant pastor; and there is every reason to believe he endeavored, by this minister's voice, to convert the peasants of his own immediate neighborhood. The Cardinal of Lorraine took care that such conduct should not remain unknown to Henry. That monarch was shocked and confounded, for he had been brought up in the closest intimacy with the person accused, and respected him equally for his military talents, and for his general information, which was considerable. In order to give him every opportunity of freeing himself from the imputation, the King took counsel with D'Andelot's brother, the Cardinal de Chatillon, and directed him to send messengers to call his relation to the court, and to warn him to be careful of his language in reply to the questions which his sovereign was bound to ask him.

D'Andelot, however, was not a character to deny his principles; and appearing at the dinner of the King, he not only professed his adherence to the Protestant faith, but declared that he looked upon that which the Papists called the Sacrifice of the Mass, as an act of gross impiety. This daring reply irritated a monarch who was both bigoted and hasty, to such a point, that, starting from the table, he seized one of the dishes to throw it at the man who thus seemed to court his anger. But eventually, like a child who cannot bridle his passion, yet dare not vent it upon the immediate object thereof, he cast the

dish down upon the ground with such violence, that it broke, wounding the Dauphin Francis, who had risen to interpose.* After witnessing this unkingly act of fury, D'Andelot retired in haste from the royal presence; but he was immediately arrested by the King's order, and conducted first to Meaux, and then to Melun. His office of colonel-general of the French infantry was taken from him; and the nomination of his successor was left to the Duke of Guise, who immediately bestowed the appointment upon Blaise de Montluc, famous for his services in Italy, and his gallant defence of Sienna.

D'Andelot was still in prison when, fortunately for himself, the treaty of peace was signed, and his uncle, the Constable, returned to France, resuming at once all his influence over the mind of the King, and strengthening it by the support of the Duchess of Valentinois. His first task was to obtain forgiveness for his nephew; and the case was, indeed, somewhat pressing, for the court of Rome was exerting itself to the utmost, to induce Henry to burn him for a heretic. D'Andelot firmly refused to renounce his faith; Henry would not set him free without some mark of submission; and all that the exhortations of his uncle, or the entreaties of his wife could obtain from the prisoner, as a concession, was to suffer the mass to be performed in his presence: an act by which he purchased his liberation, but for which he never forgave himself. The offices of which he had been deprived, were, step by step,

* Auvigny.

restored, and the Protestant religion appeared to have gained a triumph in the successful resistance of so distinguished a man to the power of the Roman Church.

Impunity seems to have begotten insolence on the part of the Reformers; and they began to shew themselves openly, and not only to hold their schools in the open country round Paris, which received the name of *ecoles buissonnieres*, but to meet for the regulation of their church and for religious worship in the capital itself, and to dare the power of the law and the indignation of the people to interrupt them. Nor was the latter danger at all insignificant, for many tumults took place; and in the month of August, 1557, a body of the Prostestants were attacked by the populace as they were dispersing from a meeting in the Rue St. Jacques, and many of them were murdered. The *ecoles buissonnieres* had been strictly prohibited by an edict in 1552; and the proceedings of the innovators were certainly, in various points not absolutely matters of conscience, contrary to the law of the land, and in direct defiance of the royal authority.

Even previous to the liberation of D'Andelot, however, great encouragement had been given to the Calvinists of Paris by the presence of the King and Queen of Navarre, and the Prince and Princess of Condé, who had been called to the capital to witness the marriage of the Dauphin with Mary Queen of Scots. Those great personages, together with a number of the noblemen and gentlemen who

accompanied them, professed, either openly or secretly, the Reformed religion, and the assembly of such a multitude of Protestants in the metropolis, naturally gave confidence to the sect. This confidence soon degenerated into the most daring imprudence, and unnecessary manifestations of their disregard of the law, and contempt for the Roman Catholic religion.

One example of this conduct will suffice. We have already stated, that the Parliament itself contained many Calvinistic members; but the university of Paris was more deeply imbued than any other body in the capital with the principles of the Reformation. The students had always asserted their right to assemble and amuse themselves in a large open space near the abbey of St. Germain, in the fauxbourg of that name. Here, in former times, tournaments, judicial combats, and other chivalrous ceremonies and sports had commonly been held; but it had of late become a fashionable promenade for the people of the capital, and was especially frequented by the members of the university. The monks of St. Germain, however, had laid claim to the property of this meadow in 1547 and 1548, and had attempted to exclude the students, proceeding to build several houses on part of the ground, which the scholars violently attacked and pulled down, when some serious tumults took place in consequence. The Parliament had been called in to decide upon the claims of the several parties, and the right of the university was established. The

meetings of the scholars had continued frequent and turbulent, and about this period it became customary with them to sing in crowds the psalms of Clement Marot, which were strictly prohibited by the French Church. Numbers of the Calvinists of Paris joined these assemblies; and after the marriage of the Dauphin, when Paris, as we have said, was filled with Protestant gentlemen from the country, the crowds in the Pré aux clercs assumed a menacing aspect, passed through the streets of the capital, openly chanting the obnoxious canticles, and were joined by bodies of armed men, who accompanied them on the way.

Cardinal Bertrandi, the chancellor, denounced these assemblies as factious and seditious; but the Parliament either neglected or refused to interfere; and political motives, mixing with religious fanaticism, induced the house of Guise, but more especially the Cardinal of Lorraine, to strike a bold stroke at the Parliament itself, and thus collaterally to depress many of the chief antagonists of the party of Lorraine.

Coligni and D'Andelot, the two of the principal supporters of Montmorenci, were, perhaps, even less obnoxious to the Guises than the Princes of the Bourbon family; for although the Duke of Vendome, from his wavering and irresolute character, was not so dangerous to the leaders of the two great factions, as his proximity to the throne and his wife's inheritance might have rendered him; his brother, the Prince de Condé, had shewn that decision of mind and military skill, with that gallant bearing and brilliant courage

which are so well calculated to win the hearts of brave and adventurous men, and are so necessary to a leader in the strife of party. The triumph of Montmorenci, the termination of a war, which, while it lasted, had given the Duke of Guise an ascendancy in the councils of the King, the open enmity of Diana of Poitiers, and the presence of various foreign princes and ambassadors in Paris, all wrought upon the Cardinal of Lorraine, and led him to risk any means, however rash on his own part, and perilous to his sovereign, in order to regain the ground which had been lost, and to raise his family to the height from which they seemed to have been thrust by the return of the Constable.

It was in the midst then of the rejoicings for the peace, and the preparations for the nuptials of Philip II. and the Duke of Savoy with the two daughters of the King of France, that the Cardinal of Lorraine seduced Henry into a mean and treacherous act unworthy of a monarch or a gentleman. He represented to the King, that the Parliament of Paris almost always found some excuse for evading the edicts against the Protestants, and suffering those who had been condemned as heretics by the ecclesiastical courts, to escape the severity of the laws. He shewed, also, that the various courts of which the Parliament was composed, were at issue amongst themselves regarding the proceedings against the Calvinists, that some condemned while others absolved, and that there was no uniformity in the execution of the statutes. Henry's mind, ready to proceed upon any course of bigotry, was easily

inflamed to punish the heretical members of the magistracy; but he was persuaded to follow a covert and deceitful method of detecting the opinions of the judges, while apparently encouraging them to free discussion. The Cardinal adroitly took advantage of the preamble of the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, which stated that one of the objects of the two kings was to check the progress of heresy, and restore unity to the Christian Church; and one of his speeches to Henry, as reported in the Memoirs of Vielleville, is too strongly characteristic of the man and his views to be passed over unnoticed.

"If it only served, Sire," he said, "to make it apparent to the King of Spain, that you are firm in the faith, and will tolerate nothing whatsoever in your kingdom, which can bring any stain upon your excellent title of 'Very Christian King,' you should set about it boldly, and with courage; also, for the purpose of giving to these Spanish princes and lords, who have accompanied the Duke of Alva, to solemnize and honor the marriage of their King with your daughter, a taste of the death of half-a-dozen counsellors at the least, who should be burnt in public, for Lutheran heretics as they are, who so spoil the sacred body of the Parliament, that if you do not take care of it by these means, and that speedily, the whole courts will be infected and contaminated, down to the door-keepers, the attorneys, and the clerks."*

* I have translated this speech as I find it, without attempting to supply the want of grammatical connexion which is apparent in one part.

By such language he encouraged the King to take the resolution of visiting the Parliament, on one of its especial days of meeting, the 22nd of May, 1559. This assembly was called the Mercurial, it having been ordained, that on certain Wednesdays throughout the year, the principal members of the Parliament should meet in the grand chamber, for the purpose of inquiring into the character and proceedings of the body generally and particularly, and holding a species of domestic tribunal with the view of keeping the courts pure and respectable.

Vielleville, indeed, boldly opposed the intention of the King, and had nearly persuaded him not to go; but the Cardinal of Lorraine, Democharès, the grand inquisitor, and various other persons, applied themselves to alarm the weak monarch on the score of conscience; and, at the time appointed, he proceeded to the convent of the Augustins, accompanied by the Duke of Guise, the Constable, the Cardinal of Lorraine, and several of the officers of his household, and took his seat with a placable and well contented air. He even encouraged the various counsellors, who had become alarmed at his unexpected arrival, to express their opinions openly on the subject which they were discussing, which happened to be precisely that in regard to which he desired to hear them convict themselves. He assured them that having learned the members of the court entertained very different views amongst themselves, in respect to the manner of dealing with the great question of Religion, and executing the late edicts

against the Protestants, he came thither for instruction on those points, and desired that every one would speak freely before him, and express his sentiments without disguise. Thus led on to their destruction, a number of Protestant counsellors displayed their opinions openly, some of them even boldly attacking the more intolerant members of the King's council, and censuring the vices and the follies of the court. Others, however, equally attached to the doctrines of the Reformation, and others tolerant of a faith from which they might differ, wisely judged that the unusual placability of the King was not natural, and though they spoke against persecution, kept a guard upon their expressions, if they did not hide their thoughts. The vehement Papists, on the contrary, announced boldly those principles of intolerance and cruelty which may be concealed from political motives or mitigated by private character, but which are inseparable from the religion they professed.

The King retired for a moment, and returned with his face full of ire. In a short and angry speech, he reproached the Parliament for having so long kept within its bosom so many heretics as he saw before him; and, after having caused five of the principal members of the assembly to be arrested, he returned to his palace, declaring with an oath, that he would witness, with his own eyes, before six days were over, the burning of Anne Dubourg, one of the unhappy men who had not only ventured

to speak in defence of the Protestant faith, but had openly alluded to the iniquities of the court.

When the King, a few days after, met with his death from a wound in the eye, the words were remembered which he had used regarding Dubourg; and the superstition of the Protestants, which was not very much less in those days than that of the Papists, remarked also, that the personage from whom he received it, namely, the Count of Montgomery, was the same captain of his guards into whose custody he had committed the prisoners.

Several other Protestants were arrested, and it became apparent to all, that it was the King's intention to make a vigorous effort for the total suppression of the Reformed religion. Vielleville assures us that the King regretted what he had done, by the time he had reached his palace of the Tournelles; but it is ascertained that the strictest orders were given for carrying on the trial of Dubourg and others, with all the rapid fierceness of anger and intolerance.

Nevertheless, in the midst of this hot persecution, the Protestant clergy, and all the Reformed churches of France, appearing by deputies, held a general Synod in the Fauxbourg St. Germain, where they drew up the famous Confession of Faith, which was thenceforward universally received and acted upon, throughout the kingdom. It is a curious and important document, consisting of forty articles, Calvinistic in all its principles, moderate in its expressions, and containing nothing that is

contrary to civil order, and due obedience to the law.*

In the midst of their religious labors, the members of the Synod did not forget the situation of their unhappy brethren who had been arrested by order of the King; and they engaged the ambassadors, then in Paris, from the various Protestant princes, to intercede for them with the monarch, and endeavor to turn away his wrath. A similar application had been successfully made some years before; but at that time Henry was himself in need of aid from the Reformers of Germany, and listened from political motives to their entreaties. Now, however, no such inducement existed; and he rejected all petitions in favor of his subjects with rudeness and indignation, ordering the proceedings against the prisoners to be carried on with the utmost rigor.

In all barbarous and uncivilized states of society, human life and human sufferings are matters of small account, and as superstition teaches men to believe that the death and misery of his erring creatures, may be acceptable to their great Creator, it is not at all unusual to find in the history of the middle ages, the fagot and the stake taking their place in festivals and merry-makings, and the procession to execution forming a part of the pageant or the triumph. The sacrifices to Juggernaut are on his great days of festival, and this is not the only resemblance between the worship of the Indian

* Aubigné, lib. ii. page 56.

idol, and the recorded practices of the church of Rome. The fiercest persecution of his Protestant subjects, which took place during the reign of Henry II., was accompanied by the fêtes and pageants of his daughter's marriage.

The Rue St. Antoine was barricaded, surrounded with scaffolds, and laid out with lists for a tournament; and from the first of June, 1559, to the last day of the month, Henry and his principal nobility ran courses, at intervals, with various foreign noblemen, displaying all that address and skill in military exercises for which the French knights were famous. On the twenty-second of the month, the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth with Philip II., King of Spain, was celebrated, the Duke of Alva acting as proxy for his royal master. The balls and festivals which accompanied this ceremony lasted eight days, and the whole concluded with another tournament on the thirtieth of the month.

The lists lay between the royal palace of the Tournelles, the gardens of the Hotel de St. Paul, and the open space before the Bastille. From the windows on either side looked down upon the gorgeous scene the gay ladies of the court of France, and from the loop-holes of the prison the persecuted members of the Parliament might witness the revellings of their enemies. On the one side, Mary Stuart, and Catherine de Medicis, and Diana of Poitiers, and Henriette de la Mark, and the Duchess of Guise, with three princes, each destined in his turn to be king of France, were assembled to view

the sports and the prowess of the reigning monarch and his chivalry; and on the other, Anne Dubourg and Louis Faur, with their companions in misfortune, might behold, from the grates of their prison, the last public scene and death-wound of him who had condemned them to the flames.

The account of every historian worthy of credit, clearly shews that through the minds of all men there spread an undefined feeling of apprehension regarding the event of the tournament. Nevertheless, all went prosperously for some time. The King opened the field by breaking a lance with the famous Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, to whom the hand of his sister was about to be given. He then ran another course with the Duke of Guise, and a third with the Count of Montgomery, who is described by Vielleville, as a tall, hardy young man. In the latter encounter, however, the monarch was somewhat shaken in the saddle, and felt annoyed that the last course which he was to run, should have been less dexterously accomplished than those which went before. Vielleville, who was appointed to follow the King, now appeared in the lists; but Henry besought that officer to let him break another lance with his young antagonist. In vain Vielleville endeavored to dissuade him, telling him that he had dreamed, on three successive nights, that a fatal accident had happened. In vain Montgomery entreated his sovereign to excuse him, pointing out, that having already finished his course, the other assailants would not suffer him to

run again. The King insisted, and, unfortunately, the young Count obeyed.

"We must remark, in the first place," say the Memoirs of an eye-witness, which I shall now follow in describing this fatal encounter, "that in all the courses, and as long as they last, the trumpets and clarions commonly sound without ceasing, rending one's head and deafening one's ears. But no sooner had both (the King and Montgomery) entered the lists, and commenced their career, than the trumpets became quite silent, without sounding at all, which made us foresee with horror the unfortunate disaster which happened. For both having very valiantly run, and broken their lances with great dexterity and address, this unskilful de Lorges* (*i.e.* Montgomery,) did not cast away, according to the ordinary custom, the fragment which remained in his hand after the lance was broken, but carried it still lowered, and in the course it came against the head of the King, struck him right on the visor, (which was raised by the blow,) and pierced his eye; which compelled his Majesty to seize the neck of his horse, and the animal, having the rein loosened, finished his career, at the end of which were the grand and first equerry to stop it, according to custom, for all the courses which the King ran, the two officers did the same on the outside of the lists."†

* He was the son of the Count de Lorges.

† I have seen a contemporary drawing of this tournament, in which Henry and Montgomery are represented as charging each

The King's helmet was immediately taken off, and he was carried into the palace, turning his face, we are told, towards the Bastille as he went, and exclaiming, with a sigh, "that he had unjustly afflicted the people who were therein."* The words are attributed to him by the Protestant writers; and although religious prejudice is very apt to pervert the truth of history, by seizing upon loose reports, and passing over authentic facts, I see no reason to doubt that a monarch, not very tenacious of principles, might regret, at a moment when he found himself upon the eve of death, acts of evident injustice and tyranny, which he had been induced to commit, under the influence of a religion of persecution, by the exhortations of men more firm and consistent than himself.

From the moment he received the wound, Henry felt that his earthly career was terminated; and, soon after he had been carried to his chamber, from which all the court were excluded, he fell into a state of lethargy, accompanied by fever. From this, however, he was roused on the fourth day, recovering his senses perfectly, but displaying no other symptom of convalescence. On the contrary, indeed, it would

other, with a barrier between, as was very commonly done. The account of Vielleville, however, shews that such was not the case; and, indeed, had that precaution been taken, the accident could not have happened, for it was in passing each other, carried on by the fire of their horses, that the splinter entered the King's eye.

* Aubigné, lib. ii. page 85.

seem that the surgeons who attended him had by this time given up all hope of his restoration to health. They had employed all the means which the medical science of that day put at their command, to remedy the injury he had received; and, for the purpose of ascertaining more exactly the nature of his wound, they had recourse during the early part of his last sickness to an expedient, which must be mentioned here as an exemplication, not only of the manners of the times, but of that disregard of all the forms of law and justice which then prevailed in France.

Choosing four prisoners, condemned for various crimes, they caused them to be decapitated privately in the Conciergerie and in the great Chatelet; and the heads being brought to the palace of the Tournelles, they forcibly drove the fragment of the broken lance into the eye of each corpse, to ascertain in what manner the brain of the monarch had been affected. But these inhuman researches proved of no avail, and it became evident to all that the King was sinking. In this state the Queen, who had been previously excluded, was called to his bed-side, and received his commands to hasten the marriage of the Duke of Savoy with his sister, without regard to his approaching death. The nuptials were accordingly celebrated by torchlight, in the church of St. Paul, on the ninth of July, 1559.

The King about this time lost the use of his speech; and the Queen, who had now recovered from the first deep grief, which she had undoubtedly felt,

sufficiently to give way to other passions, sent to demand of Diana of Poitiers various crown jewels which had been given to her by Henry, commanding her at the same time to retire from the court. The Duchess asked the messenger if the King was dead; but finding that such was not the case, although he was not expected to survive the day, she replied boldly, "Then I have not yet a master. Let my enemies know that I do not fear them. When our prince is no more, I shall be too full of grief for his loss to feel the mortifications they may inflict upon me."

On the day after the marriage of Margaret of France, her brother expired;* and Francis II. succeeded to the throne on the tenth of July, 1559. A great revolution immediately took place at the court. The party of the Queen-mother, which had been gradually rising into importance during the latter years of the last reign, was immediately swelled by the accession of all who might reasonably hope for advancement at her hands. That of Diana of Poitiers became extinct; the faction of the house of Guise was elevated in proportion; and Mont-

* Anquetil says, that Henry lingered fifteen days, and that he remained during that time in a state of perpetual lethargy. It is perfectly certain, from the testimony of every contemporary, that the monarch was wounded in the afternoon of the 30th of June, and died on the 10th of July. Veilleville, who was with him from the first to the last, assures us, that he perfectly recovered his senses on the fourth day of his illness, and, in a long interview with the Queen, gave various directions of importance.

morenci, in consequence of the strict alliance which had latterly existed between himself and the Duchess of Valentinois, shared her disgrace, although his rank, wealth, services, talents, and connexions saved him from that oblivion and neglect into which the King's mistress was plunged from the moment of the monarch's decease.

Montmorenci, however, did not give up that authority, which he had resumed immediately after his return from imprisonment, without a vehement struggle. No sooner was it known that the wound of the King was mortal, than he despatched messengers to those Princes of the blood, who happened to be absent from Paris, beseeching them to return to the capital with all speed, and take the place due to their birth in the councils of the young King. He especially addressed himself to Anthony of Bourbon, Duke of Vendome, and now King of Navarre, in right of his wife Jeanne d'Albret, and by every means endeavored to impress upon his mind the necessity of speed in all his proceedings, if he did not wish to see all power and authority usurped by the house of Guise.

The King of Navarre was at the time at Pau; the journey was long, and the utmost activity would not have brought him to Paris too soon; but weak and vacillating in all his opinions, he hesitated and delayed, proceeded to Vendome instead of the capital, and there paused to consult, while the time for action was lost. Choosing Vendome as their place of meeting, rather than Paris, the

Prince de Condé, the Prince de la Roche sur Yon, Coligni, the Cardinal de Chatillon, the Counts of Rochefoucault and Porcian, with D'Andelot, and several others, hastened to confer with the King of Navarre. But their council displayed neither union nor decision, and private passions were listened to rather than the voice of patriotism. Montmorenci, in the day of his prosperity, apprehending no such sudden stroke as that which deprived him of his sovereign and his friend, had neglected to strengthen his party by those means which the Guises never overlooked. In concluding the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, he had totally forgotten the interests of the Queen of Navarre; the greater part of whose hereditary territories had been seized upon by the Spanish monarchs; and this offence was still rankling in the mind of the Bourbon princes, when the unexpected death of Henry called upon them to unite with the Constable in opposition to the house of Lorraine.

The family of Guise had been more politic; and, taking advantage of the error which the Constable had committed, they had gained partisans amongst the friends and confidants of Anthony of Bourbon, who took care to represent to their lord the neglect of his interests by Montmorenci in the negotiations for peace, as both an insult and an injury. Thus some weeks elapsed before either the King of Navarre or the Prince de Condé could be persuaded to take any part in the struggle that was actually going on for

authority; and, before they had decided upon action, success had crowned the efforts of their adversaries.

While the King of Navarre was making his slow progress towards Vendome, and the Bourbon family were discussing their plans for the future, various events had taken place in Paris and at St. Germain, which require distinct notice. The Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine, all-powerful over the mind of the young King, by the influence of his beautiful wife, Mary Stuart, applied themselves with their usual diligence and skill to weaken and divide the party opposed to them, both by diminishing the power and authority of its members, and by sowing dissensions amongst them. In pursuit of the first object they persuaded the Queen-mother to remove Francis II. to the palace of the Louvre, immediately after the death of Henry; leaving the Constable at the Tournelles to conduct the arrangements of the monarch's funeral; and having gained Catherine de Medicis, perhaps less by their promises of unbounded devotion, than by the power which she saw they already possessed over her son, through his attachment to their niece, it was determined that Montmorenci should be stripped of his important office of Grand-master, and banished from the court to Chantilly.

The Constable, well informed of all that was taking place, made a vigorous effort to detach Catherine de Medicis from the party which she now favored. He quitted his task at the Tournelles, and visiting

the Queen-mother at the Louvre, represented to her the dangers of allying herself to the haughty house of Lorraine, in opposition to the Princes of the blood. He besought her to hold herself aloof from all factions; and, if we may believe his biographers, predicted many of the evils which were likely to befal France from the ambitious spirit of the Guises. But he was rude and unbending in speech and manner; his connexion with her rival and her enemy was fresh upon the mind of Catherine; some imprudent words, which he was reported to have uttered concerning herself, had been lately called to her mind by his adversaries; and, after listening to him coldly, she sent him back to the Tournelles, little satisfied with the interview.

From the Louvre the court removed to St. Germains; and when Montmorenci appeared at that place before his new sovereign, he received, in civil and courteous terms, his dismissal to Chantilly, with an intimation that he must resign to the Duke of Guise the office of Grand-master, the reversion of which had been previously promised to his eldest son. To compensate in some degree for this harsh act, Francis of Montmorenci was named supernumerary marshal of France, and his father submitted to a power which he was incapable of resisting. Before he quitted the court, however, he recalled to the mind of his sovereign the services which his nephews had rendered to the crown, and besought him to give them his protection. The young King

replied with decent expressions of gratitude; but it was already determined that the same course which had been pursued towards the Constable, should be followed in regard to all his family.

The Duke of Guise was less successful in his endeavors to divide the party opposed to him, than to deprive its members of their authority; for although the resentment of the King of Navarre, for the neglect which he had experienced from Montmorenci, had been weakly suffered to operate till the power of the house of Guise was fixed upon a secure basis at the court of France, yet the necessity of union soon became so evident to the families of Bourbon and Montmorenci, that some old and serious disputes between D'Andelot and the Prince de la Roche sur Yon, were easily brought to an amicable termination; and an effort made to produce a rupture between Cologni and the Prince de Condé, which I shall notice more particularly hereafter, proved utterly ineffectual.

The conference at Vendome, after a proposal to take arms and resist the faction of Lorraine in the field had been discussed and rejected, terminated in a resolution that the King of Navarre should proceed to the court, and endeavor by negotiation to recover the ground that had been lost. The Guises, however, estimated the weak character of that prince more justly than their adversaries; and knowing that cold contempt, by sinking himself and his friends in his own opinion, was not an unlikely means of shaking

his resolutions and putting an end to his efforts, they caused his reception at St. Germains to be marked by the grossest neglect and inattention. The King was taken out to hunt in a different direction from that in which he was coming; no apartments were prepared for him; and he was left dependent upon the hospitality of Marshal St. André for a lodging. The effect was such as had been expected; and the King of Navarre gladly escaped from his unpleasant position by accepting the task of conveying the Princess Elizabeth to the frontiers of her husband's dominions: thus once more leaving the field open to his adversaries.

The Prince of Condé, however, remained at the court, a much more dangerous adversary of the house of Guise than his brother; full of courage, genius and warlike ability, though rash and somewhat intemperate in the conduct of great designs. With him were Coligni the resolute, the calm, the skilful, and D'Andelot, the bold, the vigorous and the active.

The first effort of the faction of Lorraine, after the departure of the King of Navarre, was, as I have before mentioned, to create a jealousy of the Prince de Condé in the mind of Coligni. In the course of the royal progress from St. Germains to Rheims, for the purpose of solemnizing the King's coronation, the Duke of Guise entertained the court at his magnificent mansion of Nanteuïl; and he there took occasion to inform the Admiral in secret,

that Condé had been using every effort to deprive him of the government of Picardy, and had alleged that it was improper two such important provinces as Picardy and the Isle of France should be entrusted to one man, however distinguished.

"One less cunning would have been taken in," says Aubigné; but Coligni was too clear-sighted not to perceive the object of this unnecessary confidence. Yet, though he was convinced that the tale, as far as it regarded the Prince, was false, he read therein the determination of the house of Guise to deprive him of Picardy; and, thinking that after such an assertion as that which had been made, the Duke could not avoid giving command of the province to Condé, if it became vacant immediately, he resigned the government in question without delay.

The faction of Lorraine, however, had grown bold on the great augmentation of power which it had gained; and, overlooking the claims of the second Prince of the royal blood, Guise appointed Brissac to the vacant post. The confidence inspired by success proves often the most dangerous of all self-deceits to great men; for the fullest gratification of ambition only brings us to the edge of a precipice, where no safety can be found but in the prudence of every step. Guise, himself, with a greater scope of intellect than his brother, was more moderate though less cunning; but the Cardinal of Lorraine, seeing Montmorenci banished to Chantilly, the King of Navarre driven from the court,

the Queen-mother gained to his interests, the young Queen his tool, and the King obedient to his will, fancied that his power was founded on an immoveable basis, and ventured upon acts of tyranny of which the despotism of Eastern nations has rarely furnished a parallel.

After the ceremony of the coronation the court took up its abode at Fontainebleau, and great multitudes flocked thither either to pay homage to the new monarch, to solicit fresh benefits, or to claim the payment of their pensions and salaries. On the death of Henry, however, the treasury, which had been full at his accession, was found empty, and the state many millions in debt. The domain of the crown had been alienated, innumerable offices had been created to satisfy the cupidity of favorites or to furnish the monarch with means; and not only had all the posts at the court and the kingdom been filled by the creatures of one or other of the great parties, but the reversions had in some cases been given and in many had been bought.

In this lamentable state of public affairs, the first acts of the house of Guise were just and reasonable. The necessity of the case required a strong remedy, and it was applied without fear. All grants of the domain, except such as had been made for a substantial consideration, were annulled. French lawyers of a preceding period had gone farther, and denied the right to alienate in perpetuity at all. All reversionary nominations to offices, for which

no equivalent had been given, were declared void. A purer system with regard to the appointment of magistrates was announced, and economy was introduced into the royal household. In almost all these acts, another hand is visible than that of the Cardinal of Lorraine, who had the chief control of the finances; nor is it improbable that Olivier de Lenville, who, on the disgrace of Diana of Poitiers, had resumed the seals in place of her creature Bertrandi, contributed by his wise and moderate counsels to produce such just and salutary edicts.

When the Cardinal of Lorraine, however, found himself pressed in Fontainebleau by a crowd of applicants for the payment of salaries and pensions, and a multitude no less eager for the bounties which they expected to flow from a young and inexperienced King, his impatient pride took fire, and with a despotic contempt for law and justice, equally harsh and foolish, he caused gibbets to be erected in the neighborhood of the palace, and published an edict, ordering all those who had come to solicit either payment or reward, to retire within four and twenty hours, on pain of being hung.

The indignation throughout France was universal: the persons to whom the injury was offered were in general old and faithful servants of the crown, who had some claim to the rewards they sought; but the disgust and apprehension which such conduct occasioned, were not confined to the mere applicants who had been driven ignominiously from the

face of the King. Every one who had the good of his country at heart, every one who valued his own civil liberty, every one who respected the law, foresaw, in the furious rashness of the Cardinal of Lorraine, either future troubles and commotions in the land, or the loss of all security for life and property, and the destruction of the best institutions of the state.

The chiefs of the party opposed to the Guises did not fail to take advantage of this proceeding to represent to the country that such a despotic use of power was intolerable, and that those who had thus abused the authority of the King, must be speedily removed from his councils, if necessary, by force of arms. They felt, however, that they required some great bond of union in their faction, for the purpose of compensating the want of that authority of which the Guises were actually in possession; and none suggested itself but that of the Reformed religion, which many of them professed and others favored. In choosing this, as their pretext, a great mistake was committed, for a principle equally strong was ready to be arrayed against them, in the intolerant spirit of Roman superstition. They thus lost the support of several of the most influential families in the realm, and of the great body of the people, who were not prepared to abandon the faith of their fathers, or to fight in support of a religion which they deemed heretical. Had they avowed alone the object of freeing the country from the rule of men who had grossly abused their power,

and of delivering the King from the pernicious influence of those who had misused his confidence, and brought his name into contempt,—professing every respect for the tenets of the majority of the nation, and shewing no design of religious innovation, —they might have secured, upon a firm and permanent basis, the toleration of their own faith and, at the same time, commanded the zealous assistance of the innumerable great houses who hated, or dreaded, or were envious of the family of Lorraine.

One cannot expect, however, in times of strong religious controversy that men will resist the influence of the sectarian spirit, or display that calm and politic moderation which is the only sure means of attaining an end in view. Circumstances also took place in the commencement of the reign of Francis II., which naturally directed Condé, Coligni, and their companions, to put forward the claim of liberty of conscience, as the great rallying cry of their party. The intemperate use of power was displayed by the Guises in no particular more strongly than in the persecution of the Protestants. Vague and absurd rumors were spread through Paris, accusing the Reformed teachers, not only of gross indecencies, but of wild follies. They were said to hold meetings by night, in which a pig was slaughtered instead of the paschal lamb, and in which, after a number of sacrilegious ceremonies, the candles were put out, and scenes of gross debauchery and licentiousness ensued, only to be

paralleled amongst the falsehoods spread by the Roman Catholics against the Jews. Several edicts were published in the month of September, inciting people by offers of reward to denounce the meetings of the heretics; and of course witnesses were speedily found to bear testimony to gross and horrible proceedings. Two of these men were highly honored by Democharès the inquisitor, and made a recital before the Queen-mother of all they pretended to have seen.

The King's council, full of horror and indignation, which—as no man but the lowest and most ignorant can be supposed to have given credit to such tales—we may well believe to have been affected, handed them over to the chancellor, with directions to proceed upon their information. It happened, unfortunately for their purpose, however, that the chancellor was an honest man. A full and fair investigation was made; the witnesses were convicted of perjury; their story was proved to be the invention of a Roman Catholic priest; and the judges proposed to inflict upon them impartially the punishment awarded by the law to such crimes; but the Cardinal of Lorraine stepped in, and delivered them from the arm of justice.* Nay, more, the house of an advocate whom they had accused was pillaged and rased to the ground by the people, acting under an edict of the court.†

A number of other houses belonging to some of the first families in the realm were also attacked and

* Aubigné, book 2, chap. xiii. † Belleforest.

destroyed, and the whole was brought to a climax by the tragic end of Anne Dubourg. His arrest in the midst of the court of Parliament, by the order of Henry II., I have already noticed; but it is probable that the princes of Lorraine would not have carried to its consummation the rash purpose of the deceased king, had not an event occurred, which, being attributed to the Protestants, whether justly or unjustly has never been clearly proved, exasperated the minds of the Roman Catholic party, and called for an act of vengeance. That event was the murder of one of the judges, named Anthony Minart, who, as he was returning on his mule between five and six o'clock in the evening, was killed by a pistol shot from an unknown hand.

A number of gentlemen were arrested and thrown into prison on suspicion, for which not the slightest foundation could be alleged; and a writer, who is not to be charged in any degree with favoring the Protestants, admits clearly that the course of law was perverted for the purpose of fixing the crime upon some of the prisoners. All inquiry, however, proved unsuccessful, although suspicion continued to pursue an officer of the name of Stuart, who afterwards distinguished himself in the civil wars; and the Roman Catholics still insisted that the blow came from the Protestants, on account of the active part which Minart was taking in the prosecution of Dubourg.

In the trial of the latter, the principles of justice and the ordinary course of proceeding were impu-

dently violated; and Minart undoubtedly had shewn the spirit of a partisan rather than the integrity of a judge; but his death, far from proving beneficial to Dubourg, only hastened his execution. Anne Dubourg, counsellor in parliament, and also invested with ecclesiastical immunities, was a man of science and distinction, whose ancestors had filled some of the highest offices in the state. He himself was celebrated for his legal knowledge, and had been a professor of the canon law at Orleans, where his lectures gained him a high reputation. His moral integrity and honor were unquestioned, and at the early age of thirty-six he had been elevated to the magistracy, and took his seat in the Parliament of Paris, respected and esteemed by all. Before he had completed his thirty-eighth year, his abhorrence of the corruptions of Rome, and his attachment to a purer faith, consigned him to the Bastille; and,—after being most ably defended by his advocate, Marillac, after seeing all the privileges of the parliament violated in his person, the authority of the sovereign prostituted to the basest uses, and the security promised by the law to all disregarded,—he found that nothing could save him from death but falsehood to his religious principles. His own advocate imposed upon him silence, and then, in a most eloquent speech, endeavored to soften the expressions the prisoner had made use of, and to explain away the difference between his tenets and those of his judges. By this conduct his life was secured; but Dubourg, refusing to owe existence to apostacy, proclaimed aloud, in clear and indubitable

terms, his adherence to the doctrines of the Reformation, and was murdered in due form at the Place de Greve, maintaining to the last the same firmness and composure which he had displayed throughout the whole course of persecution he had endured.*

It was about this time that the Prince de Condé, personally offended with the Duke of Guise, who had excluded him from the government of Picardy, which he had reason to expect upon the resignation of Coligni, attached to the Reformed religion, though its effects upon his morals are said to have been small, and seeing that it was the determination of the house of Lorraine to exclude the Princes of the blood from all offices of power, authority, or emolument, called together at his chateau of la Ferté all the chiefs of the party opposed to the house of Lorraine; and a conference was there held which terminated in much more important measures than that which had taken place at Vendome. The indecision of the King of Navarre was no longer present to disturb their councils, and the resolution of taking arms for the removal of the Guises from authority was adopted without a dissenting voice. Some difficulty might have arisen from the position of the Cardinal de Chatillon, had not that nobleman, though at this time he adhered to the Roman

* He was executed upon the twenty-third of December according to Belleforest, on the twenty-second according to Anquetil, who is contradicted also by Bruslurt and all contemporary authorities. It may be necessary to observe that Bruslurt declares that Dubourg made a renunciation of his faith, which however is proved by other contemporaries to be false.

Catholic faith, been sincerely attached to his brothers Coligni and D'Andelot; and his countenance was of the greatest assistance to their faction, as the cooperation of a prince of the Church of Rome afforded a link between the Protestants and the Roman Catholic opponents of the House of Guise, which might otherwise have been difficult to obtain. Very different in character and manners from his two brothers, the Cardinal de Chatillon was nevertheless well qualified for taking that share in the operations of a great party, to which neither they nor Condé were competent. Calm, stern, determined, taciturn, Coligni, though fit to give energy to negotiations as well as to military operations, was not equal to conduct with diplomatic skill the finer threads of political intrigue. D'Andelot, more frank and unreserved, was too uncompromising and open to deal with subtle enemies. The rash impetuosity of Condé also rendered him unfit for the slow and careful proceedings of the cabinet, though his daring courage and military skill made him a powerful leader in the field. The Cardinal de Chatillon, however, supplied the supple, shrewd, and discriminating qualities which the others wanted. Insinuating, courtly, and soft in manner, he was in reality as reserved as his brother Coligni, without appearing to be so; and in all the transactions which followed he proved himself as skilful in negotiation as the other members of his family were in war.

An appeal to force, then, was determined on in the conference at la Ferté; but in order to quiet all

consciences, the opinion of various jurisconsults was demanded, as to whether it was lawful to take arms for the purpose of freeing the King and state from their thraldom to the house of Lorraine.* It is probable that the question was not put to any one whose judgment was not already formed, and the result was, of course, the justification by anticipation of the design which was meditated.

It was shewn distinctly that nearly two millions of Protestants existed in France; that a great number of these were men ready and able to bear arms; their willingness to resist the power that oppressed them was not to be doubted; and the only difficulty was, how to assign them a point of union, to give them a leader capable of conducting them, and to direct their efforts to the object in view simultaneously and upon a general plan, without disclosing the conspiracy to the keen eyes of the house of Lorraine, which were watching all the movements of its enemies.

Any remarkable proceedings upon the part of Condé, Coligni, or D'Andelot, would necessarily have attracted attention; and although it was determined that the Prince was to put himself at the head of the forces raised at the moment of executing the design, it was absolutely necessary to keep him in the back ground till that moment arrived. Under these circumstances, a gentleman of the name of la Renaudie,† of a good family of the south of France,

* Auvigny, Vie de Coligni.

† He is called by Bruslurt, La Rainie, and apparently is the same person named by La Planche, Raunay.

was chosen as the temporary chief of the party, and the more apparent actor under the direction of the greater men who remained concealed. He was an unscrupulous, determined, active, energetic, politic, unprincipled personage. His enemies accused him of having committed forgery and various other crimes, and it is certain that, more probably from necessity than inclination, he had visited Switzerland and several foreign countries, and that he had there made acquaintance with a multitude of Protestants, whose opinions had driven them from the soil of France.* This man readily undertook the great task allotted to him; and having been furnished with an outline of the plan of operations, which was drawn up with the greatest skill, caution, and forethought, he proceeded to make all the preliminary arrangements with a degree of ability and determination which might have elevated him to high station, had his principles, through life, proved equal to his talents.

Entering into immediate communication with various Protestants in France, and even, it is supposed, holding correspondence with the ministers of the Queen of England, la Renaudie carried on his intrigues abroad and at home, while Coligni and D'Andelot, though standing at a distance from his operations, aided him in his efforts to rouse the Calvinists, by their influence over many of the principal families in the realm.† Immense numbers were sounded; many were vaguely engaged to some

* Henault. † Auvigny.

great enterprise, they knew not what; and, while the secret instigations which they received pointed to undefined attempts, which could not compromise the conspirators, even if the language used were repeated, anonymous books and pamphlets were published, which gave point to the suggestions, and at once taught the inferior members of the party what was the object at which they were to aim, and at the same time lulled the faction of Lorraine by an appearance of that open hostility which is seldom connected with secret proceedings of any great magnitude.

One of the most remarkable of these, we find, was a work entitled "Defence against Tyrants," in which all the questions connected with armed resistance to abused authority were fully treated. Satires, libels, pasquinades, joined in with the whole artillery of ridicule to render the family of Guise despicable as well as odious in the eyes of the people; and even the royal order of St. Michael, previously consisting of thirty-six knights, became an object of derision, because the Duke of Guise had introduced into it eighteen new members, not all of the very highest merit. The order received the name of "The Collar for all brutes," and lost for ever its respectability as a mark of distinction.

As the schemes of the conspirators grew to maturity, a great meeting was called in Britanny by la Renaudie. The parliament of that province was to assemble at Nantes; and several fêtes and ceremonies, to be celebrated at the same time, afforded a plausible excuse for the gathering which took place in the

beginning of the year 1560. Deputies from the Protestants and malcontents of various districts in France, assembled at the place named, and la Renaudie, having come forward to explain the cause of their meeting, in a speech full of talent and subtlety, convinced all his hearers, not only of the lawfulness, but of the absolute necessity of the design he laid before them. He assured them of his loyalty and attachment to the young King, with the most solemn asseverations; he persuaded them that he sought the interest of the monarch himself, whose authority, if not his life, he told them was in danger from the ambition of the house of Guise, and not any factious object; and he not only gave them to understand that the Prince de Condé was ready to put himself at their head as soon as the moment for action arrived, but also that the Queen-mother and many of the principal personages of the court secretly favored their views.* The plan he proposed was to the following effect, that a body of gentlemen unarmed should present a petition to the King for

* Anquetil, zealous for the Catholic faith, makes the following perverted statement regarding the meeting at Nantes, ingeniously putting forward a minor fact as his principal assertion, while all the important accessories are false. "No one displayed either surprise or discouragement, when they found that the object was to attack in a state of peace, and in a kingdom without troubles and without factions, almost in the arms of the king, ministers clothed with his authority." This gentleman must have had a strange notion of a kingdom without troubles and without factions, when they were fighting daily in the streets of Paris, and one party levelling the houses of the other to the ground.

the removal of the evils of which they complained, and upon that being refused, which he doubted not would be the case, that they should seize the person of the Duke of Guise, his brothers, and their principal supporters, and place the Prince de Condé at the head of affairs till the King was old enough to act for himself. An oath was willingly and immediately taken by the whole assembly to carry out this scheme to the utmost of their ability, and sixteen persons were chosen to superintend secret levies of troops in the various provinces of France.*

In the meantime the court was at Blois, enjoying the fine air on the banks of the Loire, and spending its days in fêtes and amusements. The Duke of Guise and his brother, confident in their great power, little suspected the storm that was gathering around them, but thundered decree after decree against the Protestants,† and treated the high nobility of the realm with contempt. A vague rumor at length reached them of some conspiracy against their power being on foot; and they removed the King to Amboise, as a place more capable of defence. No preparations, however, were made for resistance; and as the troops which were daily advancing from all parts of France towards the centre of the kingdom, when once assembled would have far outnumbered any force that could be brought against them, the fate of the family of Lorraine trembled in the balance, till the imprudence of la Renaudie placed his secret in their

* Aubigné.

† Several of these are to be found in the journal of Bruslurt.

power, and called them into immediate activity. In answer to some questions, addressed to him by an advocate of Paris named Avenelles, in whose house he lodged, he acknowledged the existence of a conspiracy, and detailed some of the particulars. This man was one of his old and intimate friends, and, apparently, not very favorable to the court, but of a weak and timid nature. He was seized with terror at the great enterprise which his guest disclosed; and he immediately revealed the facts to one of the masters of requests, named Marmagne, a creature of the Cardinal of Lorraine. Marmagne in turn despatched him to the Duke of Guise; and in an instant the security of the court was at an end, and all was bustle and confusion. As the very first step, the informer was thrown into prison; but he could give little information in regard to the intentions of the conspirators; and the proceedings of the Duke of Guise and his brother display a degree of haste and consternation, which accorded but little with their reputation for firmness and presence of mind. Robert Stuart, and other prisoners, who had been confined in the prison of Vincennes on mere suspicion, were sent for without loss of time; but nothing could be discovered from them, as they were apparently ignorant of the whole affair.

The King's council, whether actuated by doubts, or hoping that in the moment of terror the presence of the Princes of the blood and of the great house of Chatillon, might wring from the King and the family of Guise, those concessions which the security

of the state and the constitution of the French monarchy demanded, despatched messengers for the Prince de Condé, D'Andelot, and the Admiral de Coligni;* and the Queen-mother, disgusted with the assumption of the house of Lorraine, which had excluded her from all share in the government,† prepared to support any moderate proposal which might be made by the opponents of the Guises. The Chancellor Olivier also, too upright to see the laws of his country trampled under foot without resistance, was anxious to take advantage of the opportunity of reducing the inordinate power of those who had not ceased to misuse the authority which had been intrusted to them; so that a formidable party, in opposition to the house of Lorraine, was seen gathered together within the walls of Amboise itself.

In presence of the principal persons of the court, Coligni boldly attacked the acts of the government, and demanded, as the only means of restoring tranquillity, that an edict, modifying or suspending the punishments pronounced against the Protestants, should be immediately promulgated. The Chancellor and the greater part of the council joined strenuously in his views; and a decree was obtained which, though not quite so comprehensive as he desired, might have put an end to the insurrection, if la Renaudie and a number of the conspirators had not been already in arms.

While all these events were taking place, the brothers of Lorraine had recovered from their sur-

* Aubigné. † Veilleville, book viii. chap. iii.

prise, and were now adopting energetic measures for defence. Nor was any time to be lost, for the discovery of the conspiracy had changed nothing of the plans of la Renaudie, except as to the time and place of rendezvous. The first was altered from the fifteenth to the sixteenth of March, and the latter was fixed in the neighborhood of Amboise instead of Blois. But by this time, the Duke of Guise had obtained further information from one of the inferior conspirators, named Liniesres; and, collecting what troops he could at Amboise, he sent orders to the King's lieutenants in all the provinces to disperse the various bands of armed men which were traversing the country.

It is evident, from the accounts of Vielleville and de Serres, not only that, throughout the whole of these transactions, the King was a mere cipher in the hands of the Duke of Guise and his brother, but that his will was opposed by them, and that the desire which he himself expressed that they would quit Amboise, and leave him to see whether the animosity of his people was excited against himself, or against them, received not the slightest attention from the proud men whom he had raised to such excessive power.

The rapid approach of the rebels, however, the numerous troops which were reported to be in arms in various parts of the kingdom, and the appearance of la Renaudie with a large body of horse and foot near Noisé, at the distance of about a league and a half from Amboise, caused no little consternation in

the court; and the object which the insurgents had in view met with many to approve, even within the walls of the castle. "Their end was merely," says Vielleville, "to seize upon the two brothers, to give freedom to the King, whom they kept in their hands as if by force and violence, and to re-establish the ancient laws, customs, and statutes of France, without in any way affecting the person of his majesty."

In this conjuncture, it was proposed to send M. de Vielleville to la Renaudie and his companions, for the purpose of exhorting them to lay down their arms, and present themselves respectfully before the King, in order to express their grievances. He was charged to assure them that those grievances should be immediately redressed; and to promise them, on the monarch's royal word, pardon and safety. Vielleville, however, "knowing the felony of the two brothers," to use the words of his Memoirs, "excused himself from this bloody commission."

The Duke of Nemours, less suspicious, undertook the task; and, while the Duke of Guise adopted measures to defend the town both against any attack from without, and against the efforts of a number of conspirators who, we are told, had made their way into the place in the train of the Prince de Condé, that Prince proceeded to Noisé with a hundred horse, and was permitted by Monsieur de Castelnau, who had taken command of the forces there collected, during the temporary absence of la Renaudie, to enter the castle with ten compa-

nions, in order to confer peaceably with the principal insurgents. He there not only promised in the name of the King all that Vielleville had been instructed to offer, but he signed a paper embodying the engagement, and in the King's name swore to observe it. On this assurance, Castelnau, and fourteen of his companions accompanied him peaceably to Amboise; but the instant they arrived in that place, they were thrown into prison, and put to the torture, notwithstanding the vehement remonstrances of the Duke of Nemours, "who fell into marvellous anger and despair," says Vielleville,* "on account of the great injury done to his honor." In vain that Prince used the mediation of Mary Stuart, of the Duchess of Guise, and of other high ladies of the court, in order to obtain the deliverance of the prisoners. The only reply he received was, that a king was no way bound to keep his word with his rebellious subjects; and knowing the danger of suffering such prayers and remonstrances to reach the monarch's ears, the Guises caused a proclamation to be made, forbidding any one farther to importune his majesty on pain of incurring his indignation.

In the meantime, the different troops of insurgents were met, dispersed, captured, and slain; and although la Renaudie exerted himself with

* I venture to use the words "says Vielleville," in this and other passages, because it is well known that Caloix, the Marshal's secretary, who compiled his Memoirs, wrote from information received direct from Vielleville himself, and often used that nobleman's own expressions.

vigor, diligence, and courage, to gather together a sufficient number of men in any one spot, to make head against the forces of the Guises, all his efforts proved unsuccessful. Being himself at length overtaken with few companions, by one of his own relations, a young officer attached to the court, he died defending himself valiantly, having killed his cousin with his own hand.

The unfortunate wretches who were made prisoners, and carried to Amboise, suffered a more terrible fate, many of them being tortured before they were put to death; and although the Chancellor Olivier, repenting of the part he himself had taken, obtained from the King an amnesty, in despite of all the efforts of the family of Guise, for such of the insurgents as laid down their arms and returned quietly to their homes, the tyrants of Lorraine soon found a pretext for revoking this act of mercy; and for several days the massacres continued in the roads and fields of France.

Castelnau and his fourteen companions were tried in Amboise, after the torture, and were executed on the evidence of the confessions which had been wrung from them. Some were broken on the wheel, some suffered on the block, some were hung from the windows of the castle, all crying shame upon the treachery of the Duke of Nemours. The Lord of Castelnau, himself, who was one of the last to suffer, proclaimed the Duke on the scaffold, a traitor unworthy of the name of Prince; and dipping his hands in the warm blood of one of his companions just

slain, he raised them all bloody to Heaven, calling to God for vengeance on his base betrayers.*

This terrible scene produced such an effect upon the mind of the Chancellor Olivier that he sickened, fell into a deep melancholy, and sighing and murmuring continually, took to his bed. The Cardinal of Lorraine visited him in his chamber, but Olivier turned his face to the wall, and would hold no communication with him, till discovering by the sound of his retreating steps that he was retiring, he cried, "Ah cursed Cardinal, thou damnest thyself, and makest us condemn ourselves likewise:" two days after which he died.

Triumphant over the insurgents, the family of Guise took advantage of the occurrence to raise themselves and depress their enemies. The Duke obtained a new commission as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and he prepared to attack Condé upon some accusations which the torture had wrung from the unfortunate prisoners. But Condé, with his fiery courage, met him in a way that he did not expect, and rising in the council, complained of the

* I have never read any work in which the truths of history are so much perverted as the facts of the conspiracy of Amboise are by Monsieur Anquetil. I have principally taken my account from the Memoirs of Vielleville who was present, comparing that work with the short account given by Castelnau Mauvissierre. It is but right, however, to inform the reader that, in regard to all the details, almost every contemporary historian contradicts the others. The statements respecting the Duke of Nemours, however, as given above, are placed beyond doubt by the coincidence of Castelnau and the Memoirs of Vielleville.

suspicions circulated against him, denied in guarded terms that he had instigated any person to revolt against the authority of the King, and ended by declaring that if any one brought the charge openly, he was ready to lay aside the privileges of his rank as Prince of the blood, and defy his accuser to single combat. Guise knew that the words of Condé were addressed to him, and with cunning policy replied, that if the Prince were driven to such a course, he entreated that he might be chosen as his second.

To Montmorenci was entrusted the task of announcing to the Parliament the conspiracy of Amboise and its results; a dangerous commission, for every word required to be weighed, when, on the one hand, there was the risk of drawing down upon his own head the indignation of the King, and on the other, that of condemning by his own voice his friends and partisans. But the Constable extricated himself from the difficulty with great skill. He said as little as possible, detailed the facts simply without entering into minor particulars, censured the conspirators in mild and somewhat doubtful terms, but added nothing in defence of their adversaries.

Thus terminated the conspiracy of Amboise; but other events sprang from that conspiracy which I shall have to mention hereafter. I will now, however, turn to the main subject of this history, as in the transactions which immediately followed, we find the first mention of that great Prince, some account of whose life I propose to write.

THE LIFE OF HENRY IV.

KING OF FRANCE.

BOOK I.

HENRY IV., King of France, was the third son of Anthony of Bourbon, duke of Vendome, and Jeanne d'Albret, princess of Navarre. Anthony of Bourbon was descended in a direct line from Robert of Clermont, fifth son of St. Louis.* The name of Bourbon was adopted by the Count of Clermont on his marriage with Beatrice, heiress of John of Burgundy, baron of Bourbon; but the arms of France were still retained by him and his descendants. The county of Vendome entered into the family by the marriage of John of Bourbon, count of la Marche, with Catherine, sister of Bouchard, count of Vendome, who died childless. That county, at a later period, was raised to the rank of a duchy by Francis I., in favor of Charles, the father of Anthony, when his cousin, the famous Constable de Bourbon, enjoyed the highest favor of the monarch. By his marriage with Frances of Alençon, widow of the first Duke of Longueville, Charles, duke of Vendome, had seven sons, of whom Anthony, who succeeded him, was the second, Louis,

* Some persons state Robert of Clermont to have been the sixth son of St. Louis.—See Moreri, article Bourbon.

the eldest, dying before his father. Francis, the third son, who early displayed great military abilities, and gained the battle of Cerisoles, was killed in 1546 by a trunk cast out of the window of a house in La Rocheguyon. The fatal event was attributed to accident, but strong suspicions were entertained, which pointed at the private enmity which existed between the gallant Prince and Cornelius Bentivoglio, and more remotely at the jealousy of his military renown entertained by Henry II., then Dauphin, and by Francis, afterwards Duke of Guise. A fourth son, also named Louis, died in infancy. The fifth, named Charles, received the Roman purple, and is known in history as the old Cardinal de Bourbon. The sixth, John, fell at the battle of St. Quentin; and the seventh, named Louis, like his two elder brothers, took the title of Prince de Condé, embraced the Protestant religion, and played a prominent part, as we have already shewn, in the troubles of the times.

Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henry IV., was the only child of Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre. That small sovereignty, which formerly extended to both sides of the Pyrenees, and had been divided into higher and lower Navarre, had entered the family of Albret by Catherine de Foix, sister of Phœbus, last king of the house of Foix, who died without posterity. During his life, his sister had married John d'Albret, the father of Henry, of whom we now speak; and thus were united in the person of the latter the kingdom of Navarre, and

the large estates of the two great Gascon families of Foix and Albret, comprising Bigorre, Bearn, Foix, Armagnac, Albret, and many other territories. But upper Navarre, before the period at which this history commences, had been invaded by Ferdinand, king of Arragon, and remained in possession of the Spanish crown, leaving the Pyrenees as the boundary of the kingdom on the south.*

All the male descendants of the elder sons of St. Louis, except the branch of which Henry II. was, at his accession, the sole surviving representative, had been extinguished before the marriage of Anthony of Bourbon with Jeanne d'Albret, so that the princes of the house of Vendome were the nearest in blood to the crown of France, on failure of the issue of Henry the son of Francis I. The posterity of Robert of Clermont, however, had various other branches, the principal stem of which, that of Montpensier and la Roche sur Yon, was founded by Louis, second son of John II., count of Vendome, one of whose descendants took an active part in the civil wars which preceded the reign of Henry IV.

The union of Marguerite of Alençon, sister of Francis I., with Henry d'Albret, king of Navarre, had naturally attracted the attention of the Emperor Charles V., who retained unjustly that portion of Henry's dominions, the possession of which Ferdi-

* Although some of these details have been given before, I think it right to recapitulate the facts here, that the reader may be perfectly familiar with the descent and connexions of Henry IV., before he enters upon the actual history of his life.

nand, king of Arragon, had acquired by conquest; and it is evident that he looked with some anxiety for the issue which would spring from this marriage by the coarse allusion which the Spaniards made to the arms of Navarre, when Marguerite's first child proved to be a daughter: "The cow," they said, "has brought forth a sheep."

Henry d'Albret never either forgot the insult, or abandoned the hope of recovering the dismembered portion of his dominions. But the disastrous wars of his brother-in-law, and the successful career of the Emperor, diminished day by day the probability of such a result. Nevertheless, the extensive territories which centred in his person, rendered the hand of his daughter an object of eager competition; and Charles V. himself, seeing the advantages to his family which might be obtained, by at once extinguishing the claims of any other crown to Spanish Navarre, and by gaining a footing on the French side of the Pyrenees, formally demanded the hand of Jeanne d'Albret for his son Philip, afterwards king of Spain. Francis I. frustrated his views, and affianced the young heiress to the Duke of Cleves. This engagement, however, was afterwards solemnly annulled; and, as we have shewn, the Duke of Vendome was married to the Princess of Navarre in the second year of the reign of Henry II.*

The first fruit of this union was a son who died

* Perefixe places this marriage in 1547; but as we have before shewn, both from Belleforest and Henault, it is proved that this marriage took place at Moulins, in October, 1548.

in infancy; and though a second male child speedily succeeded the first, his life also was but of short duration, an accident, we are told, having brought on a lingering disease, of which he expired after several weeks of suffering. The old King of Navarre anxiously desired to see an heir, who at some future period might assert the rights which he had never been able to make good against the Spanish crown, and he was deeply grieved at the loss of this second grandchild. But when his daughter again became pregnant, he called her hastily to his court, with a resolution, as it afterwards appeared, of superintending himself the nurture of her infant.

The Duchess of Vendome was at this time with her husband in Picardy, but at her father's summons, she set out for the south of France in the wintry month of November; and, displaying that hardy and vigorous constitution which she transmitted to her son, she traversed the wide extent of country which lay between the extreme frontier of France and her father's territories in the short space of eighteen days, arriving at Pau not quite a fortnight before the birth of her third child. There is reason to believe that various motives, besides that attachment to her parent which she had always displayed, induced Jeanne d'Albret to undertake so long and fatiguing a journey at so critical a period. Information had reached her, we find, that the King of Navarre had fallen under the influence of a lady of Bearn, who had employed her

power over his mind, as is usual in such connexions, to enrich herself, and also that the Prince, with weakness not uncommon, even in great men, had made a will in favor of his mistress, which was likely to deprive his daughter and her husband of a considerable portion of their expected inheritance. The natural anxiety of Jeanne d'Albret to see this will was communicated by some of the court to the old King, and he in reply assured her that he would place it in her hands as soon as he beheld the child she was about to bear, upon the condition that she should sing him a song in the pains of labor; "In order," he said, "that thou mayest not give me a crying and a puny child."

The Duchess promised to perform the task, and at the moment of the birth of her son, as soon as she heard her father's foot in the chamber, she saluted him with one of the songs of her native country. When the child was shewn to him, Henry d'Albret took him joyfully in his arms, and remembering the sneer of the Spaniards, he exclaimed, as if with a foresight of what he would become, "My sheep has borne me a lion!" Then giving his will to his daughter, he continued, "There, my child, that is for thee, but this is for me,"—and carrying the boy, wrapped in a fold of his dressing gown, into his own chamber, he rubbed his lips with a piece of garlic, and gave him from his own golden cup some drops of wine.

These anecdotes are repeated by so many authors

of the time, that we are not permitted to refuse them a place in history.

Whether the King of Navarre did or did not imagine, as has been asserted, that such unusual treatment of a new-born infant would insure to his grandson a hardy and a vigorous constitution, it certainly indicated the course of education which he wished to be pursued; and nothing was left undone that could strengthen the corporeal frame of the young Prince, and prepare him for the hardships and exertions of a military career. Though a strong and powerful child, some difficulty was, at first, found in rearing him; and, perhaps, too high a degree of anxiety in regard to his health, caused the frequent change of nurses, which was, of course, detrimental to the infant.

Great rejoicings took place on the occasion of his baptism; and his grandfather displayed all the splendor of the little court of Navarre, which the Emperor, Charles V. once declared, had received him in his passage through France with greater magnificence than any other court he had visited. His godfathers were Henry II. of France and Henry d'Albret of Navarre; and the rite, which was performed according to the usages of the Church of Rome, was administered by the Cardinal of Armagnac, Vice-legate of Avignon.

From the castle of Pau the Prince was speedily removed to that of Coarasse,* situated nearly at the

* This word is now generally written Couraze.

mouth of the beautiful valley of Lourdes; and there, under the immediate superintendence of his grandfather and a distant relation, Susannah de Bourbon, Baroness de Miossens, commenced that hardy education which lasted till after the death of the King of Navarre. That monarch, we are told by a contemporary author, "reproached his daughter and son-in-law with having lost several of their children by French delicacies; and in fact," the same writer goes on to say, "he brought up his grandson after the fashion of Bearn, with naked feet and head, very often with as little refinement as peasants' children are nurtured."* No rich clothing, no playthings were given to him; and Henry d'Albret especially commanded that he should neither be flattered nor treated as a prince, but fed upon the ordinary diet of the country, and dressed in the simplest manner. He was allowed to climb the rocks and mountains, and try his limbs in robust exercises from the earliest period of life, and all that could be done to invigorate mind or body, appears to have been strictly attended to in his years of infancy.

The death of the King of Navarre, however, and the troublous times which succeeded, soon interrupted the course of the young Prince's education, and called him from the grand and striking scenes of Bearn, so well calculated by their wild sublimity to fill the mind with great and elevated thoughts, to the vicious capital of a turbulent kingdom, and to a

* Aubigné.

court totally devoid of virtue. The Duke of Vendome and Jeanne d'Albret were in the French capital at the time of her father's death; and they both eagerly prepared to hasten back to Bearn, in order to take possession of the estates and dominions which descended to them by that event. But unexpected obstacles were cast in their way, Henry II. seeking to strip them of the small part of their kingdom which was left, in order to annex it to the crown of France. The states of Navarre, however, refused to surrender their liberty; the finances of Henry were exhausted by war; and the fear of seeing the troops of Philip of Spain introduced into Bearn, if he endeavored to obtain possession of the territory in question by force, induced the French monarch to desist from his pretensions. He attributed, however—and in all probability justly—the resistance he had met with from the states to the instigations of Jeanne d'Albret and her husband; and, like all men frustrated in an iniquitous design, he conceived a hatred for those who had disappointed him, which continued unabated during the rest of his life. The first effects of his dislike were apparent in the separation of the governments of Languedoc and Guienne, both of which had been held by Henry d'Albret. To that of Guienne the Duke of Vendome, now King of Navarre, was permitted to succeed, as first Prince of the blood; but in exchange he was forced to give up Picardy, and did not obtain Languedoc as he had every reason to expect. We

may trace the same vindictive spirit in the total omission of his claims to the restitution of upper Navarre, in the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis, though Anthony of Bourbon himself attributed this neglect to the personal dislike of the Constable.

Having been at length permitted to take possession of the dominions of Henry d'Albret, the King of Navarre and his wife remained for nearly two years in Bearn, and only returned to the court of France on the marriage of Mary Queen of Scots with the Dauphin Francis; on this occasion they were accompanied by their son, who is described as a peculiarly beautiful and engaging boy of between five and six years old. Their sojourn in the French capital, however, was not long; and before the death of Henry II., they had returned to their mountain principality, where the Queen of Navarre devoted herself to the education of her son, who received successively the titles of Prince of Viane, Duke of Beaumont, and Prince of Bearn.

During their visit to the court of France, an incident occurred which is worthy of remark, as it connects itself with after events in the life of Henry IV. The Prince, then in his fifth year, entering a room where his father and the King of France were engaged, not in the most friendly conversation, ran up to them, and attracted the attention of Henry II. by his grace and beauty. The monarch took him in his arms, kissed him, and asked, "Will you be my son?" The boy, however,

pointed to the King of Navarre, replying, "No, that is my father."

"Well then, will you be my son-in-law?" demanded Henry.

"Oh yes, willingly," answered the Prince; and we are assured, by some of the writers of the day, that from that hour, his future marriage with the Princess Margaret was resolved upon by the two kings.* Such engagements, indeed, are rarely regarded as binding by monarchs; and it is certain that, if a promise of his daughter's hand was really made by Henry, at this time, it was only afterwards fulfilled by his son upon very different considerations from those which influenced himself.

The death of Henry II., and the struggle of factions which I have already displayed, soon recalled the King of Navarre to the court of France; but his wife and son were left in Bearn; and instead of hearing that he had taken the place to which his rank entitled him in the council of the young French monarch, they soon received intimation that he had accepted the inferior and detrimental task of escorting the Princess Elizabeth, now married by proxy to the King of Spain, as far as the frontier of her husband's dominions.

* Victor Cayet. Upon the details afforded by this author, who was not only contemporary, but attached to the person of Henry IV. from the time that Prince was eight years old, and upon the "Relation de M. de Calignon," Chancellor of Navarre, together with the letters from Bordeaux, preserved by the Duke of Nevers, and the account given by Aubigné and Sully, I found the whole of this account of Henry's early life and education.

As the royal bride necessarily passed through the province of Guyenne and part of the territories of the King of Navarre, magnificent preparations were made for her reception by Jeanne d'Albret, who with her son advanced to the limits of Guyenne to meet her. Every sign of respect and affection was shewn to the Princess; but the occasion was too favorable for marking the independent sovereignty of the King of Navarre in his wife's hereditary dominions, to be neglected. So long as the royal party remained in France, Anthony of Bourbon gave precedence in all things to the young Queen of Spain; but no sooner had they crossed the frontier of Navarre, than the first lodging marked out in each town they entered, was reserved for the King himself, much to the indignation of the royal officers of France and Spain who accompanied Elizabeth on her journey. Even in passing through Upper Navarre, the same order was observed, the dispossessed monarch not being at all unwilling to revive his claim to the territory which he entered as a stranger, even in a point of ceremony.

At Roncesvalles, to which place the Queen of Navarre and her son accompanied the unhappy Elizabeth, her French attendants left her, and she was delivered into the hands of the Spaniards; but, as if anticipating the dark and cheerless career before her, as the third wife of a cold and selfish tyrant, the unfortunate Princess, while taking leave of the King of Navarre, fainted in his arms, and was with difficulty recalled to life. The mere duties of

persons in high station are often as painful as the misfortunes of humbler individuals.

After the return of the Navarrese court to Pau, the King of Navarre, we have every reason to believe, held himself aloof from the intrigues which were going on at the court of France; and I find no proof that the preparations for the conspiracy of Amboise were even communicated to him. After that event, indeed, the Prince de Condé, retiring from the court, joined him at the town of Nerac, and the suspicions of the house of Guise were immediately excited by the close union of the two brothers. Their destruction was resolved upon by the adverse party, the more readily as the Prince, in quitting the court, had boldly avowed his adherence to the Protestant faith, and had announced his determination never again to be present at the celebration of the mass.

The attention of the faction of Lorraine was now directed to the means of drawing the King of Navarre and his brother back to the court of France; and an assembly of the principal persons of the kingdom having been appointed to take place at Fontainebleau, in the month of August, 1560, the two princes were summoned to bear part in the consultations of the other notables for the general pacification of the country. Condé, and the Navarrese monarch, however, suspecting the designs of their enemies, neglected to attend, giving an evasive answer to the royal summons, and conferring eagerly with a multitude of Protestant gentlemen, who flocked to visit them at Nerac.

In the meanwhile, the notables met at Fontainebleau, and notwithstanding the absence of him who might be considered as the head of the Protestant party, a vigor and decision was displayed by the adherents of the Reformed church which produced the concession of several of their demands. The families of Montmorenci and Chatillon appeared at the court, accompanied by strong bodies of armed men, and Coligni presented to the assembly a petition for liberty of conscience from fifty thousand Huguenots. Many of the Roman Catholic prelates, also, admitted and lamented the disorders of the church to which they belonged; and Marillac, archbishop of Vienne, proposed that if a free general council was not immediately called by the Pope, a national council should be held in France, and the States-general of the country assembled, to restore peace and order in both civil and ecclesiastical affairs.

This suggestion found favor with the great bulk of the personages present, and the States were accordingly summoned to meet at Meaux; but though the Archbishop himself was undoubtedly sincere in his views, yet many amongst those who supported his proposal, and more of those who merely yielded to it, were actuated by very different motives. Marillac and his friends advocated the assembly of the States-general, with a conscientious belief that the party strife which desolated the country might be terminated by the meeting of the deputies of the nation. It is true, nothing but inexperience of the principles which govern the conduct of great public bodies, and little

knowledge of the preponderance of individual selfishness over disinterested benevolence in our common nature, could lead reasonable men to hope for anything but confusion from the assembling of a multitude of human beings of the most opposite views and interests, little accustomed to deliberate together, in order to discuss questions of deep importance which affected them all in very different directions. But still we have no cause to believe that many of those who urged the meeting of the States were actuated by any but the purest motives. It is certain, however, that others saw in such an event the means of pulling down political adversaries and of raising themselves into power and influence; while the party who ruled, yielded to the suggestion, not unwillingly, from the confident expectation of being able to turn the convocation of the states to their own ambitious purposes, and to lay a net therein for the feet of their enemies.

Such, undoubtedly, were the views of the Duke of Guise and the Cardinal of Lorraine; and before the conferences of Fontainebleau broke up, an event occurred which shewed them, that to agree to the proposal of Marillac, was the only way to deliver themselves from a great and imminent danger. The proceedings of the Prince de Condé, at Nerac, had been watched with the jealous eyes of suspicion, and spies of various grades and classes, from humble domestics to high officers of the crown, had been despatched into Guyenne to report every movement that took place in that quarter, especially when it became evident,

that neither the King of Navarre nor his brother would attend the meeting of the notables. Nevertheless, though doubts and apprehensions increased, nothing definite could be discovered in regard to the designs of those princes, till towards the end of August, when the imprudence of a servant of the King of Navarre betrayed the secrets of his master's brother, by whom he had been employed to negotiate with various disaffected noblemen.

This personage, named la Sague, had quitted Nerac some time before the assembly of nobles at Fontainebleau took place; and, furnished with letters, the real contents of which have never been discovered—for it is impossible to give full credence to the testimony of a man under fear of the torture —he visited the Constable at Chantilly and the Vidame de Chartres at Paris. He then proceeded to Fontainebleau, where, unwarned by the fate of la Renaudie, he communicated some of the important secrets of his mission to a person named Bonval, whom he had known in former times. Bonval betrayed him to the Duke of Guise, who now learned enough to perceive that he himself or Condé must fall, and that the only means of bringing the contest between them to a speedy and successful issue, was to consent to the assembling of the States-general, and summon that Prince and the King of Navarre to take part in their deliberations. If the princes obeyed the call, it would be easy to arrest them; and if they refused to appear, a fair pretext for declaring them rebels would be at once afforded.

The passions of various historians have of course given to the conduct of the Princes of Lorraine the most opposite coloring, in the contemporary accounts of these transactions. Some assert that a determination to put both Condé and his brother to death, was taken at a very early period by the Duke of Guise. Others declare, that such a resolution was forced upon him in the end as an act of self-preservation; and some endeavor to exculpate him from the charge of entertaining it at all. It is probable, however, from the general course of human actions, that, though he did undoubtedly harbor such a purpose, so dark and sanguinary a deed was not resolved upon at once, and that vague ideas, first of arresting and then of trying the Bourbon princes, were entertained long before the frequent additional proofs of Condé's irreconcilable enmity to the house of Guise produced the determination to destroy them both.

The discovery of the negotiations carried on by la Sague, and the suspicion of armed movements in consequence, were studiously concealed till the conferences of Fontainebleau had terminated. The emissary of the Prince was strictly watched; and although he had received some intimation of his danger, and endeavored to retire in secret, he was speedily overtaken and brought back to the court. His cowardice now completed what his indiscretion had begun. The papers found upon his person were apparently of little importance, consisting of complimentary letters from various high personages to the

Bourbon princes, from which nothing could be extracted to criminate either the sender or the receiver. But la Sague was interrogated, and on his denying the truth of Bonval's statement, he was threatened with the torture. His courage then gave way, and to escape that horrible and iniquitous infliction, he made a confession, which, whether true or false, implicated Condé to a fatal degree. He acknowledged that it was the design of that Prince to seize upon several strong places in France, to incite insurrection in Picardy and Britanny, to endeavor to get possession of Paris itself, to deprive the family of Guise of the authority they possessed, and to place himself at the head of the government with the aid of his brother and the Constable. He added still one more act of treachery, under the influence of terror, and revealed to those who menaced him, that if the letters of the Vidame of Chartres to the Prince de Condé were wetted, characters would become apparent which were not visible while they remained dry. The matter was soon put to the proof, and a secret communication was discovered in the hand-writing of the secretary of the Constable, which though it did not actually give a foundation for a charge of high treason, yet gravely compromised the house of Montmorenci..

Various partial insurrections, which took place about this time, added greater weight to the discovery of the conspiracy. Rouen and Dieppe revolted against the established authorities; an attempt was made upon Lyons; and part of Provence

was actually in arms. The greatest delicacy was now required in the conduct of the court, in order to avoid giving the alarm to the Prince de Condé, without neglecting due measures of precaution; and certainly, a number of acts were committed by the faction of the Guises, which should have afforded sufficient warning to the Bourbon princes, of the purposes entertained against them. The Vidame of Chartres was arrested,* and thrown into the Bastille; la Sague was kept in strict confinement; large bodies of troops were moved into all those districts where insurrections were expected; and the king's officers in all the provinces were ordered to be at their posts, and to quit them upon no account whatsoever. The failure of the enterprise against Lyons, also, was calculated to put the Prince upon his guard, as a number of his partizans were taken therein, and he could not count upon the fidelity and discretion of all, amongst so many men, whose lives were at the mercy of his adversaries.

Another indication of jealous suspicion on the part of the court, though it did not directly point at Condé, was the alteration of the place appointed for the assembling of the States, from Meaux to Orleans,

* Although Auvigny does not mention the arrest of the Vidame of Chartres till after that of Condé, it is evident, from the account of Aubigné, of Brantome, and other contemporaries, that it took place almost immediately after the confession of la Sague. Le Laboureur and Brantome, both imply that the Vidame was a favored lover of Catherine de Medicis, but supplanted in her affection by the Cardinal of Lorraine. In all these events, the intrigues of the bedchamber complicated those of the cabinet.

which was announced shortly after the attempt upon Lyons had been frustrated. Nor were these events the only warnings which the Prince received. The Duchess of Montpensier, the confidential friend of Catherine de Medicis, gave the family of Bourbon clear intimation that danger would follow their appearance at the States. She also suggested, that if they decided upon obeying the King's summons, it might be as well to seize upon the children of the Duke of Guise, and detain them as hostages in Sedan till the Princes of the blood had been suffered to retire in safety from Orleans. It is not impossible, indeed, that this hint might spring from the bold and politic mind of Catherine herself; for it was far from her interest to suffer the house of Lorraine to become absolute masters of the kingdom by the weak favor of the King, and the destruction of the Princes of the blood.* The Princess de Condé, and her mother, Madame de Roye, at the same time, urged eagerly upon the Bourbon princes the impolicy of trusting themselves both together in the hands of their enemies; and it was proposed that the King of Navarre, who had taken no active part in the intrigues which had so deeply compromised his brother, should appear in the States, while Condé remained in Bearn.

While the family of Bourbon were still hesitating,

* Davila's account of the Duchess of Montpensier, and of the manner in which Catherine continually used her frankness as the cloak of her own art, would seem to afford some confirmation of such a suspicion.—Davila, liv. ii.

undecided how to act, the Count de Crussol appeared at the court of Navarre, bearing to Anthony of Bourbon a letter from the King of France, most admirably contrived to answer the ends of the house of Lorraine. Had no notice been taken of the suspicions entertained of Condé, the snare would have been too apparent; and had the anger of the monarch and his favorites been expressed in violent and threatening terms, the alarm created would have frustrated the design of leading the Prince into the trap laid for him. On the contrary, however, the letter was firm, yet moderate, with an appearance of candor concealing its profound art. The exact point, to which the daring courage of Condé would carry him, was calculated with the utmost nicety, and the tone of command likely to overawe the King of Navarre was preserved throughout. No attempt was made to dissemble the fact, that serious accusations existed against the Prince; but the young monarch, in directing the King of Navarre to come to the court, and bring his brother with him, in order that the latter might clear himself of the suspicions current against him, added terms of kindness and interest, well adapted to remove all apprehension of the violent proceeding which was contemplated.

This letter was followed by a visit from Marshal St. André; and the brother of the two Princes, the Cardinal de Bourbon, followed close upon St. André's steps. Both envoys being charged to assure Condé

and Navarre, in the most solemn manner on the part of the King, that no attempt should be made upon their liberty, and every privilege of their rank should be given them in the council and in the States. It was thus, upon promises which had in one instance been already shamefully violated, that Condé and the King of Navarre determined to obey the royal command, and set out for Orleans in the month of October, 1560.

At Limoges, they were met by a body of between seven and eight hundred armed gentlemen, who offered to accompany and defend them, and in plain terms expressed their conviction that the Princes were going to captivity, if not to death. Their assistance, however, was declined; and not far from Limoges a very different force appeared, being a strong party of the royal troops, commanded by Marshal de Thermes. He affected to have orders merely to do honor to the King of Navarre and his brother; but Condé soon perceived that the object of this unusual distinction was to ensure that no change of his resolution should take place; and de Thermes accordingly left a body of cavalry to follow at a little distance, thus cutting off the possibility of escape.

In the meanwhile, the King had entered Orleans, not in the peaceful guise of a sovereign about to meet the great council of his people, but with all the array and panoply of war. Possession was taken of all the city gates by his troops, barricades

of masonry were erected across many of the streets,* and guarded as military posts; and the square of l'Etape, in which Francis took up his abode, was defended by a hastily constructed battery mounting three guns.

Such was the state of the city when the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé appeared at the gates;† and if this threatening aspect had not been enough to alarm them as to their approaching fate, the cessation of all marks of respect which took place, now that they were irretrievably entangled in the net, would have been sufficient to shew them their danger. The anger of kings is generally sooner discovered in the faces of their courtiers than in their own: when admitted to the presence of Francis, the Prince de Condé found him surrounded by the Princes of Lorraine and their adherents; and after a few, brief, cold words, the young King led him to the apartments of the Queen-mother, where he reproached him angrily with all the enterprises of which he was accused, and ordered his instant arrest, replying merely to the defence which Condé attempted to make, "Well, in order that the truth may be better known, I will cause the whole to be investigated with the ordinary forms of justice."

* Vielleville, lib. viii. cap. xv.

† The Memoirs of Vielleville state that the King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé did not actually arrive at Orleans together, the Prince having preceded his brother; but this fact is rendered doubtful by the concurrent statements of many other historians.

The Prince was then arrested by the captains of the guard, and carried into a neighboring house, which had been previously prepared for the purpose, by blocking up all the windows that looked into the adjacent gardens. The King of Navarre was less severely treated; for though he was closely watched and no possibility of escape allowed him, yet he was left apparently at liberty. The imprisonment of his brother excited his deepest grief and indignation; and feeling, perhaps, that his own apprehensions of seeing his territories snatched from him, had aided to lead the Prince de Condé into the snare, he remonstrated vehemently with Catherine de Medicis, upon the treacherous act that had been committed in violation of the King's promise, solemnly conveyed to him by the Cardinal de Bourbon. The Queen affected to be as deeply grieved as himself, lamented the fate of the Prince de Condé, and assured him that she had no share in the proceedings of which he so justly complained.

Several other arrests were made by the King's officers, both within the city of Orleans, and in other parts of France. Almeric Bourchard, chancellor of Navarre, and secretary to Anthony de Bourbon,* La Hay, steward to the Prince de Condé, and Groslot, bailiff of Orleans, were all cast into prison about the same time; but a far more important personage had been long before

* Davila, d'Auvigny.

marked by the suspicious eyes of the family of Guise, as one of the most open supporters of the malcontent princes. This was Magdalen de Roye, mother of the Princess de Condé, niece of the Constable de Montmorenci, and sister of the Admiral de Coligni, who was seized in her country-house at Annecy, and imprisoned at St. Germain. Nor can there be the slightest doubt that an intention had been formed of arresting the Constable himself, as soon as he appeared at the States. Montmorenci, however, was old in affairs, and although he had been summoned to the assembly, and had actually set out for Orleans, as if to obey the King's commands, he found many plausible excuses for avoiding all haste, till the news of Condé's imprisonment, and the numerous arrests which were daily taking place, induced him to determine upon avoiding altogether the dangerous neighborhood of the court. D'Andelot also retired to Lower Britanny; but the Admiral, who had been more cautious in committing himself to the plans of the conspirators, now shewed himself more bold in action, and hastened to Orleans to oppose with fearless openness the machinations of his enemies.

In the meantime, the proceedings against the Prince de Condé were carried on with the indecent rapidity of passion and tyranny; and passing over the ordinary forms, which assigned for the trial of a Prince of the blood royal, no other tribunal than the court of Peers, and to a Knight of St. Michael no

other judges but the order, the King's council appointed a special commission for the trial of the Prince, consisting of the Chancellor de l'Hospital, the President de Thou, and two counsellors, named James Viole and Barthelemi. The Prince solemnly protested against this irregular tribunal, refused to answer the interrogatories addressed to him, and appealed to the King, the Parliament of Paris, and the Court of Peers. It would seem, from the account of the historian de Thou, son of one of the commissioners, that this appeal was secretly suggested to Condé by the President himself; who, though obliged by the King's command to sit in judgment on the Prince, held the whole transaction in abhorrence, and wished to see the trial removed to a more legitimate court.

Notwithstanding all the eagerness of the Duke of Guise and his brother to bring the affair to a close with the utmost speed, many formalities and discussions protracted the proceedings, and every measure was taken to save the Prince. His wife cast herself at the feet of the King to beseech his mercy, and even sued humbly to the proud house of Lorraine; the very judges were besieged with applications for lenity; "and the whole of France," says a Roman Catholic historian, "was touched with compassion at the fate of the two brothers, except their enemies." But the King replied with a cold falsehood;* and the Princes of Lorraine boldly an-

* He asserted that the Prince had aimed at his crown and life.

nounced their purpose, of "cutting off the head of rebellion and heresy, by two blows at one time."*

Nevertheless, the Duke of Guise was not without anxiety as to the result, and lost no opportunity of courting all those who were not absolutely attached to the opposite party. Thus nothing but very serious apprehension, could have induced so proud and overbearing a Prince, invested with the whole power of the state, to wait for a considerable time at the gate of the city, for the arrival of Vielleville, on the return of that officer from Dieppe; and many other traits of his conduct might be cited to shew, that, while working out the slow consummation of an act, prompted by vengeance, as well as ambition, he was agitated by all that dread of defeat, which generally attends the perpetration of great crimes.

The trial of the Prince de Condé, if trial it could be called, proceeded towards its conclusion; and it became evident to all men what the result would be. Condé, however, never for a moment lost his firmness or his good spirits. He constantly refused to plead before his judges, or to answer their interrogatories; and he consoled the solitary hours of imprisonment, by writing letters to his wife, full of affection and comfort. But while his unwilling judges were thus slowly advancing towards his condemnation, his brother, the King of Navarre, against whom no proofs of guilt could be adduced,

* Davila.

was in a state of more immediate danger than even Condé himself. The design was formed of assassinating him in the presence of the young King, and some historians assert that the hand of Francis himself was to strike the first blow.* The King, it was arranged, was to press him with accusations, and, on the slightest intemperate reply, the signal for his death was to be given. Information of this design was communicated to the Bourbon prince, and though timid and infirm of purpose in the general course of action, he shewed, in the face of immediate danger, all the gallant spirit of his race. When summoned to the cabinet of the King of France, after receiving notification of his peril, he turned to one of the old and faithful servants of the house of Navarre, telling him that he was probably going to his death, but would defend himself to the last; and he then added, "Cotin, if they slay me, as I am told they will, find means to carry my bloody shirt to my son, and adjure him by the name of God, by his blood and by his honor, to avenge me, when he shall be of age to do so."†

With these words he entered the presence of the King, who reproached him, in angry terms, with various acts from which he strove to pick matter

* Cayet Chron. Nov. Aubigné, however, says, that it was the Duke of Guise and Brissac who undertook to slay him.

† Cayet Chron. Nov. Aubigné. Davila does not enter into the particulars of the designs against the King of Navarre, though he clearly states that such were entertained by the family of Guise. Davila, lib. ii.

for offence. The King of Navarre, however, answered respectfully and moderately; and whether the remonstrances which the Queen-mother had certainly addressed to her son,* made him hesitate, or fear and remorse withheld his arm, the Bourbon prince was permitted to retire uninjured,—the Duke of Guise venturing to exclaim, "Oh what a coward we have for a king!"†

Though frustrated in their design upon the King of Navarre, the house of Guise soon saw their intrigues for the destruction of his brother, reach a point where there seemed no escape for their victim. The Prince's appeal to the Court of Peers was declared null; and upon his own instructions to his advocate, shamefully used against himself, together with the testimony of witnesses who had been terrified by the sight of the torture, or actually exposed to its agonies, he was found guilty of high treason, and condemned, by the majority of an extraordinary council, held for the purpose, to suffer death by the axe. The sentence was drawn up in writing, and the members of the council were called upon to sign it. The Chancellor de l'Hospital, however, and one of the counsellors, named Du Mortier, anxious to save the Prince, required time for consideration; and the Count de Sancerre (Louis de Beuil,) refused to obey an order to affix his sig-

* Cayet.

† These words are given somewhat differently by different authors, but the meaning in all is equally offensive to the monarch, and indicative of the design entertained.

nature given by the King himself, saying boldly, that he would rather die than subscribe to a judgment contrary to the laws of the land.* Whether the rest of the council signed the sentence or not, is a matter of doubt, the President de Thou having informed his son, that it was drawn up, but never signed.

Before the day appointed for the execution, however, namely the 10th of December, the will of the Almighty, over-ruling the designs of man, took from the house of Guise the great stay of their power, and frustrated all their schemes against the Bourbon family. Of a weak and sickly temperament, the young King of France had long shewn decreasing bodily powers, and in the month of November, 1560, he was seized, while dressing, with a fainting fit, from which he was with difficulty recovered.† From that moment his decline was rapid, but not uninterrupted. An abscess shewed itself in the ear; and the pain which he at times suffered was severe. At other times he seemed to be upon the eve of convalescence; and the court fluctuated between hope and fear as these changes were announced, and as the different passions of the various parties impelled them.

The Guises eagerly urged upon the Queen-mother, the necessity of carrying into execution the sentence pronounced upon the Prince de Condé as speedily as possible, and at the same time pressed her to cause the arrest of the King of Navarre, and have him

* Le Laboureur. † Davila.

likewise judged and condemned, even by a more summary process than that which had been used for the destruction of his brother. Catherine, however, took counsel with the Chancellor, who not only opposed the authority of the laws to such a proceeding, but brought forward the strongest political arguments, to confirm the Queen in raising up a barrier against the encroachments of the house of Lorraine, by reconciling herself with the Princes of the blood.

The words placed in his mouth by Aubigné are very remarkable, and probably express what he really uttered. "Take care, madam," he said, speaking of the fears by which the Guises had endeavored to drive her to put the King of Navarre to death. "Take care, madam, that by a preposterous foresight, you do not raise France in arms against you, for putting to death the first Prince of the blood, having also the rank of a king, seeing the great peril that there is in executing kings even upon lawful grounds. What can they impute to him, but the unhappy fortunes of his brother, except the having been instrumental in bringing him into this place. If you cast him unjustly into prison, you must put him to death unjustly, for you would be very long in effecting a reconciliation with a prince too far offended. You have the power of keeping the balance between the great men of the court and of making them struggle as to who shall serve you best, having a knowledge of government and your family full of kings. Be

mistress and not serf of your bad counsellors; and be sure that if you spill your kindred blood, according to their desire or their wrath, by that very act you sacrifice your crown and your state."

It is more than probable that Catherine's own views were similar to those of the Chancellor, for we find that she had always kept up a certain degree of intercourse with the King of Navarre, by means of the Duchess of Montpensier, ever since the arrest of his brother;* and Vielleville, attached to her own household, had been frequent in his secret visits to the Navarrese prince,† for the express purpose, we are told, of maintaining a friendly feeling between him and his royal mistress. The advice of Del'Hospital, and several others of her most attached friends, led to still further advances towards the King of Navarre, and Catherine, after a brief hesitation, during which the anxiety and apprehensions that she felt, drew from her a bitter flood of tears, resolved upon taking the decisive step of visiting the King of Navarre by night, and in secret.‡ She was conducted to his apartments by the young Dauphin d'Auvergne, son of her friend the Duchess of Montpensier; and as by this time she had ascertained that no hope could be entertained of the recovery of Francis II., she at once laid the founda-

* Davila.

† Mems. de Vielleville, lib. viii. cap. 16.

‡ Davila, whose father was long one of her personal attendants, gives the account adopted in the text; but Aubigné, though he mentions the secresy of the interview, says that the King of Navarre was brought to the chamber of the Queen.

tion of a negotiation which was carried on to a conclusion in several subsequent interviews.

In the meanwhile, the house of Guise neither shut their eyes to the approaching death of the King, nor to the imminent danger in which they stood of losing entirely the support of the Queen-mother. They had shewn her too little respect and consideration, during the period of their power, to hope for any favor at her hands; and, when they discovered that the apprehensions in regard to the Bourbon princes, which they had endeavored to instil into her mind, had only the effect of leading her to seek a reconciliation with them, they determined to employ the same means, and made secret overtures for that purpose to the Prince de Condé. His reply was quite of the same character with the whole of his demeanor during his imprisonment. "There is no better mode of terminating our differences," he answered, "than at the point of the lance."

His brother, however, proved less intractable; and the Queen-mother, whose character had not been justly estimated by the Princes of Lorraine, still maintained their interests from political motives, without retaining any real regard for either of the two brothers. Hitherto Catherine de Medicis, since the death of her husband, seeing that the influence of the Guises over the mind of her son was established on a foundation which she could not hope to shake, had contented herself with watching the

proceedings of all parties, assuming a tone of perfect neutrality, favoring the Princes of Lorraine only as far as was necessary to maintain her own position, and often without actually opposing their measures, mitigating the ferocity of their ambition by suggesting scruples and doubts to the young monarch. But with the utmost skill and discernment, she had made herself acquainted with the characters of every one who surrounded her, knew all their weaknesses, and serviceable qualities, and collected for herself a party, not equal indeed in importance to either of the other two which she found existing after the death of Henry, but which was of sufficient weight to give the preponderance to either of the others, as soon as the habitual influence of the house of Guise over the mind of the King, ceased with the reigning monarch's life.

Catherine now saw clearly that the opportunity had arrived for taking into her own hands a greater share of power; and that so long as she could nicely balance the two factions of Bourbon and Lorraine, during a long minority, the sovereign sway must rest with herself. Thus her personal ambition required, that, though she aided to raise the King of Navarre and his brother from the depressed state into which they had been cast, and to deprive the house of Guise of a portion of the power it had usurped, she should not elevate the one too high nor sink the other too low. But it would be doing less than justice to this extraordinary woman, did

we not allow that the best interests of her son and his people, required exactly the same line of conduct; and there are many reasons for supposing, that the welfare of the state was, at this time, an object of as great consideration to Catherine, as her own advancement to power.

With the most consummate skill, she carried on her negotiations with the King of Navarre; granted a large part of his demands, evaded the rest, persuaded him that she would shew greater favor to his friends, and greater coldness to his enemies than she intended to display, and induced him to resign his claim to the Regency during the minority of her second son, even before the young King's death. She promised, in return, that Anthony of Bourbon should command the provinces as Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, that Condé, and all the prisoners who had been implicated in the charges against him, should be enlarged, that his sentence should be annulled, and that the Princes of the blood should have their due place and influence in the council. All these points were openly stipulated and agreed to; and the Queen moreover undertook to negotiate with the King of Spain, for the restoration of Upper Navarre to the husband of Jeanne d'Albret, though she well knew the fact, to which hope blinded the eyes of the King of Navarre, that the negotiations would prove fruitless.

Two of the principal demands of the Bourbon princes, were, that the followers of the Protestant

religion should have entire liberty of conscience, and that the Princes of the house of Lorraine should be stripped of all authority at the court of France.* To the first of these conditions Catherine had no power to accede, without the consent of others; and the second was repugnant to all her political views; but she contrived to overcome this difficulty, by making a secret promise to the King of Navarre, from the trammels of which, she trusted to accident and her own skill, to deliver her at some future period. She represented to him the necessity of concealing their views in favor of religious liberty, till they had conjointly taken possession of the sovereign power, when they could bring the parliaments to adopt their measures by degrees; and she shewed him that it would be most dangerous to attempt the entire overthrow of the Guises at once, though time would enable her to depress them lower and lower, without driving them to resistance. The easy Prince was soon persuaded to an apparent reconciliation with the Duke of Guise, on being solemnly assured by the dying King, that the family of Lorraine were in no degree responsible for the persecution which he and his brother had suffered. He well knew the monarch's assertion to be false; and yet he affected to believe it; but he had soon

* Davila, who had every opportunity of knowing the truth, details all the facts connected with these demands, and the methods that the Queen took to satisfy the King of Navarre without committing herself.

reason to perceive, that when weak men join with more crafty persons in an attempt to deceive others, they are certain sooner or later to be the victims of one party, if not of both. The most prudent step taken by the King of Navarre, throughout the whole negotiation, was that of refusing to conclude it absolutely before the arrival of the Constable, to whom he had sent messengers, as soon as the King's state became desperate. Without the presence and co-operation of that great man, a party only headed by Anthony of Bourbon would have been of little weight; but with the cautious experience of Montmorenci to direct its proceedings, and the activity, vigor, and courage of Condé, Coligni, and D'Andelot to carry them on, the faction of the Princes might set the house of Lorraine at defiance.

Before the Constable reached Orleans, Francis II. expired, on the fifth of December, 1560; his malady having proceeded so rapidly to a close, that rumors of his death having been accelerated by poison were current at the time, and have found some writers to countenance them, even in the present day. The town of Orleans instantly became divided between the two great factions; the nobles, the states, and even the military, took part with the Guises or the Bourbons as affection or interest led, and each party watched the other with jealous suspicion, ready to fly to arms at the first call of its leaders. The approach of Montmorenci was looked for with anxiety by all, and apprehension by many; but Catherine, whose deep insight into the characters of men, was the

chief guide of her policy, had already despatched a gentleman of the name of Lansac to meet him, with all those promises and expressions of confidence, which were best calculated to win a man, who had always desired to be looked upon as the great stay and support of the state. The Queen, by her messenger, at once restored to Montmorenci all the functions of Constable; and when he reached the gates of Orleans, he found the guard ready to receive his commands as generalissimo of the royal forces. Dismissing them at once from the armed posts that they held, he is said to have exclaimed, "As the Queen restores me to my functions, I will soon take care that the soldiers shall not have the trouble of mounting guard in time of peace."

He then proceeded to the royal residence, and on seeing the young King, was moved to tears by the manifold thoughts of the past. He shewed himself moderate, though firm, in his dealings with the opposite faction; the party of the Princes gained consistency and strength from his presence; the arrangements entered into between the Queen and the King of Navarre were confirmed by a council held immediately after; and Catherine assumed the regency, with Anthony of Bourbon for Lieutenant-General of the kingdom, and Montmorenci in command of the royal forces. The Duke of Guise was suffered to retain the grand-mastership of the royal household; and the Cardinal of Lorraine remained at the head of the department of finance. The only person who had cause to complain of his interests

not being attended to, was the Prince de Condé, who was suffered to remain in prison several days after the death of Francis II., and was only liberated on condition of retiring to la Fère, with the promise that he should be speedily justified by a decree of the council and of the parliament.

From this period, to the end of her life, Catherine de Medicis continued to exercise greater power over the councils of France than any other person, leading rather than ruling, guiding rather than commanding. She was at this time in the forty-first year of her age, retaining great traces of that beauty which had distinguished her in youth, tall, well formed, and graceful, with a countenance full of intelligence and variety. Her powers of enduring fatigue were great, and she delighted in exercise carried even to excess. Fond of pleasures, and restrained by no moral principles, she sought enjoyment without scruple, and only covered her licentiousness with a thin veil of grace and wit. From her native country she brought to France a taste for the fine arts and the elegancies of life; but amongst the small courts of Italy she had received that education in a cunning and deceitful policy, which affected in a lamentable manner the whole course of her career. Shrewd, penetrating, and dexterous, she displayed neither great scope of intellect nor profundity of thought. She was always ready to seize and to employ the best means of overcoming existing difficulties, or obtaining an immediate object; but the operations

of her mind were always confined within a narrow limit, and extended themselves unwillingly to things future or remote. The chief characteristic of her mind was levity, which tends to every sort of vice in private individuals, and to all shades of crime in princes: to it is to be attributed her disregard of moral restraint, and her indifference to human suffering, the narrowness of her political views, the frequent changes of her plans, her insincerity towards her friends, even when they were serving her zealously, and her levity towards her enemies whenever the struggle with them was absolutely over. She could feel nothing deeply, neither love nor hate, remorse nor shame, compassion nor rage. When she slew, it was as much to deliver herself from a difficulty, as when she flattered and seduced; and it was her habitual inaptitude to receive any strong impression, rather than an inherent narrowness of intellect, which appears to have prevented her from forming any general plan of action, or conceiving any vast design. Her chief passion would seem to have been ambition, but even that was greatly affected by circumstances; and we may reasonably doubt, notwithstanding the criminal means which she employed to retain power, whether it was very violent within her; for the existence of strong passions less frequently produces great excesses, than the want of just principles. Passion injures the moral sense but in few points; levity of character extinguishes it altogether.

BOOK II.

The States-general called by Francis II., continued to sit for six weeks after his death; but it is not necessary in this history to give any account of their proceedings, which ended without much honor to themselves, and with no benefit to the nation.

On the 28th of January, 1561, an amnesty was granted by the young King to all political offenders, except the actual leaders of the conspiracy of Amboise; and the consideration of the claims of the Protestants to liberty of conscience was delayed, in order to give time for a second assembly of the States, appointed to take place in May, 1561; but in the meantime an edict was published on the 30th of January, prohibiting all religious disputations.

In the month of February, the same year, the Prince de Condé appeared at the court for the first time since his imprisonment, and on the following morning took his place at the council, which immediately pronounced a decree, exculpating him of all the crimes of which it had formerly declared him guilty. He afterwards presented himself before the parliament of Paris, which also proclaimed his innocence of all the acts which had been laid to his

charge; and thus, in the space of a few months, was he arrested, tried, condemned, sentenced to death for high treason, liberated, and declared guiltless of all offence. To complete this extraordinary picture, it was determined to effect an apparent reconciliation between himself and the Duke of Guise, his mortal enemy; and accordingly, after some difficulty, a set form of explanation was drawn up, and the Prince met Guise before the whole court at St. Germain. The Duke then solemnly assured him that he had brought no charge against him, and that he was in no degree the cause of his imprisonment. The Prince, without affecting to believe him, replied, that he held those who had done so, to be "wicked and miserable;" and Guise rejoined, "So do I also; but that affects me not." After these words they embraced, with as much sincerity as the Duke of Guise had spoken, and remained at the court watching the moment for mutually injuring each other.

The year 1561 was far advanced before this nominal reconciliation took place, and various events had occurred in the meantime, which I shall briefly notice, before I proceed to touch upon some interesting facts mentioned by contemporaries regarding the early life of Henry IV., who was once more brought by his mother to the court of France, in the early part of the reign of Charles IX.

The coronation of the young King was solemnized at Rheims, in the month of May, and the Duke of

Guise, who took advantage of every opportunity to put forward his claims to the same honors which had been granted to him in the last reign, contested successfully with the Princes of the blood, the first place in the ceremonies which accompanied the consecration of the monarch. In this particular the Queen favored his pretensions; and a still more severe mortification was inflicted on the Protestant party in the month of July, by an edict, which restrained them in the public exercise of their religious worship, although it left the consciences of individuals free in all matters of faith. This law, however, was contradictory to itself on various points; and loud and somewhat outrageous clamor was excited against it, which caused it subsequently to be superseded by another, of which more will be said hereafter.

To counterbalance this act, a concession was made to the Reformers, which produced very different results from those which the most experienced politicians of the court anticipated. The Admiral de Coligni, and other gentlemen attached to the Protestant faith, eagerly urged upon the Queen-mother, the necessity of permitting a conference to take place between some of their most celebrated divines and the prelates of the Roman Church. The proposal being debated in the council, the Cardinal de Tournon raised his voice loudly against it, alleging various good and various specious reasons for avoiding a discussion which could only tend to shake the founda-

tions of the established religion, by the very recognition of a right to doubt and to deny the doctrines of Rome. The King of Navarre, vacillating alike in policy and faith, supported the proposal, with Condé and the Admiral; and to the surprise of many, who did not remember that vanity has even a stronger hold of the human mind than policy, the Cardinal of Lorraine rather favored the idea of a conference, in which he hoped to display the eloquence on which he prided himself. With his consent, the petition of the Protestants was agreed to; the place of meeting was appointed at Poissy; and letters of safe-conduct were forwarded to Theodore Beza, Vermeil, Peter Martyr, and other divines of the Reformed church. The Pope in vain attempted to prevent the conference; and in the end sent a legate, together with the general of the Jesuits, James Lainez, to watch the proceedings and endeavor to deprive the Protestants of any advantage they might hope to gain by the assembly.

We need not pause to examine closely all that took place in the conferences which ensued, and which obtained the name of the Colloquy of Poissy. At the time appointed, the court of France, accompanied by a vast number of cardinals and bishops, met twelve ministers of the Protestant faith. Beza and the Cardinal of Lorraine led the discussion, the one on the part of the Protestants, and the other on that of the Romish Church. Both displayed great eloquence and high powers of mind, and both claimed

the victory in argument; but though the simplicity, force, and sincerity of Beza produced a great effect upon many, the skill of the Cardinal, in bringing into prominent light the difference of opinion between Calvinists and Lutherans, on the article of the Eucharist, shook the confidence of some of the principal personages present in the Protestant divines.

The conferences terminated without any direct result; but the French reformers gained courage and vigor from the impulse given to their exertions, and pressed the court vehemently for the right of holding their religious assemblies in public.

The state of parties at the French court, shortly after the accession of Charles IX., was highly favorable to the rapid progress of the Reformation in France; but accidental circumstances, skilfully taken advantage of by the house of Guise, had, before the end of the first year of that King's reign, restored the preponderance of the Roman Catholic party. Of the leading personages who sided at first with the Protestants, one was only bound to them by political and family attachments, and a second was of so unstable a character that his support could not be reasonably counted upon for any great length of time. The Constable de Montmorenci, who, though now advanced in years, was by his rank, his services, and his great possessions, the only person competent to counterbalance the power of the house of Guise, was a firm and zealous Papist, abhorring all innovation, and only restrained

from actually persecuting the Huguenots* by the strong affection which he entertained for his nephews of the house of Chatillon, and by his hatred of the family of Lorraine. The King of Navarre, on the other hand, had always shewn himself a zealous protector of the Protestants, although he had not actually professed himself a convert to their doctrines. The prudent self-restraint which he displayed, in this respect, was generally attributed to the influence of his wife, who feared that the loss of their territories would ensue, if they openly avowed their adherence to the doctrines of the Reformation.† By every other consideration, however, which could influence a wise or a politic man, he was bound to maintain the cause of religious toleration, being himself imbued with principles opposed to the established church, connected by the nearest ties with the leaders of the Huguenots, and opposed, in the fiercest manner, to the two chiefs of the Roman Catholic party.

Many circumstances, indeed, rendered it as

* It was about this time that the name of Huguenots was first given to the Protestants of France. Innumerable writers have given as many different explanations of this singular appellation; some saying that it came from one of the gates of Tours, under which the Protestants used to assemble, some from the name of one of their teachers, and others from a small piece of money. Montluc, however, who is one of the first to mention them by this name, acknowledges, that even then it was not known whence the word was derived.—See Commentaires de Montluc, liv. v. See also Mem. de Castelnau.

† Brantome.

likely, at the beginning of the reign of Charles, that oil and water should mix, as that Montmorenci and the King of Navarre should go over to the faction of Lorraine; and one of their first acts, after the government had been settled, was to threaten to quit the court and to cause the Parliament of Paris to declare Anthony of Bourbon regent, unless the Guises were excluded from all share in the management of affairs. Their purpose was frustrated by Catherine de Medicis, who, by advice of de l'Hospital, caused the King to lay his express commands upon Montmorenci to remain in attendance upon his person. The veteran soldier did not venture to disobey; and the rest of his party followed his example. But very shortly afterwards, events occurred which changed entirely the posture of affairs, and enlisted all the passions and prejudices of the Constable on the side of his ancient enemies. In the first place, Catherine de Medicis, whether from conviction or policy, shewed a strong inclination to embrace the doctrines of the Reformation. Protestant ministers were admitted to the court, the Catholic churches were deserted, the dogmas of Rome were openly censured and assailed, and the Constable clearly perceived that the principles of Calvin were daily gaining ground. The Bishop of Valence,* we are assured, preached in one of the halls of the palace without his episcopal dress, which ex-

* He was brother to the famous Montluc, one of the bravest and most distinguished soldiers of France, but one of the most sanguinary and bigoted of persecutors.

cited the indignation of Montmorenci so highly, that he ordered his soldiers, with threats of even more violent conduct, "to pull that Protestant minister out of the pulpit."* Another passion, almost as strong as religious fanaticism, was soon added to the motives which induced the Constable to make common cause with the family of Guise. The greatest reproach against his character was the avaricious greediness which he so frequently displayed; and a great mistake, committed by Coligni and Condé, soon brought this overpowering inducement to act against themselves.

At the death of Francis II. the finances of the state were in the most lamentable condition. A debt of forty-three millions of livres had been contracted without the slightest apparent means either of discharging the principal or interest, or of meeting the current expenses of the year. After the breaking up of the States-general, which had been summoned to meet at Orleans, a new assembly was convened in the month of May following, but upon a more limited plan, only three persons being chosen from each of the thirteen provinces of France: one to represent the nobles, another the clergy, and another the commons of the kingdom. Either after the meeting of this body itself, as some authors assert,† or in the preparatory assemblies of electors, as others declare,‡ it was suggested, as a means of remedying the financial difficulties of the state, that

* Auvigny. † Davila, liv. ii.

‡ Anquetil, vol. vi. page 166.

all those persons, who, for well nigh half a century, had fattened upon the favor of Francis I., Henry II., and Francis II., should be forced to disgorge the immense sums of which they had drained the country. It is strongly asserted that the Admiral de Coligni and the Prince de Condé were the authors of this proposal, and that they were animated by the desire of stripping the house of Guise of a portion of its vast wealth. Three other persons, however, of no slight importance in the state, were implicated in the danger of confiscation, which threatened the house of Lorraine. These were Montmorenci, the friend of Henry II., the Marshal St. André, that monarch's favorite, and Diana of Poitiers, his mistress. Each of these personages had accumulated immense riches by the favor of their sovereign and all were unwilling to refund any portion of that which they had obtained.

The principal movers, in the course suggested, had always proposed to themselves, to shield Montmorenci from the results which they intended to bring upon the heads of others; and they assured him, with every protestation of regard and reverence, that he should not suffer in the slightest degree. But Montmorenci was not to be thus satisfied. He felt highly indignant at the very proposal; he called to mind the services he had performed, the sacrifices he had made, the sums he had paid for the ransom of himself and various members of his family; and while his mind was in this state of irritation two other

persons, equally interested with himself, applied themselves zealously to heal his differences with the house of Guise, in order that the great power of the several parties, thus to be leagued together, might frustrate the attempt from which they had all so much to fear. Marshal St. André, luxurious, ostentatious, brave, skilful, and cunning, united with Diana of Poitiers, to excite in the mind of the Constable the highest indignation against his nephews, for the proposal which was attributed to them, and to move him by fears for the safety of the Roman Catholic religion. At the same time, every means were taken to soften and remove his enmity towards the Duke of Guise, and to produce strict co-operation between himself and the house of Lorraine, for the purpose of resisting strenuously, any attempt to strip the favorites of Henry II. of their wealth, or to grant farther concessions to the Protestants of France.

Diana of Poitiers, who had considerable power over his mind, was supported by the Duchess of Montmorenci, who had always shewn herself inimical to her husband's nephews. The efforts of both, however, might have been frustrated by the influence of the Constable's eldest son, had not the sudden illness of a wife, to whom he was deeply attached, called Marshal Montmorenci to Chantilly. During his absence, the representations of Diana of Poitiers proved successful, and the Constable bound himself for ever to the interests of the house of Guise. A treaty was drawn up between the two Dukes, in

which Marshal St. André was admitted to share, and the parties to it thence derived the name of the Triumvirate.*

Such a powerful accession to the faction of Lorraine, naturally alarmed the Queen-mother, by overthrowing the balance which she had endeavored to establish, between the two great parties in the kingdom; and she saw no means of restoring the equipoise, but by casting the whole weight of her authority into the opposite scale. The policy of the house of Guise, however, aided by the shrewd suggestions of the Church of Rome, and the powerful influence of the Spanish ambassador, over-reached even the artful woman to whom they were opposed. She courted the King of Navarre eagerly, indeed, flattered his vanity, yielded to his wishes, and appeared to confide in his judgment; but she had not those inducements to hold out, which the other party proffered without the slightest intention of realising; and her affected dependence upon him, was not a sufficient compensation to the vanity of that vacillating Prince, for the too open contempt with which he was regarded by the Huguenot party. Brantome assures us that the Colloquy of Poissy, by displaying to the King of Navarre the great discrepancies which existed in matters of faith between various sects in the Protestant church, determined his doubts, and fixed him in the unvarying dogmas

* Immediately after this league was formed, the Constable and the Duke of Guise bound themselves to each other by oath, and took the Communion together.

of Rome. But we find so many other motives suggested for abandoning the Huguenot party, and attaching himself to the Triumvirate, that we can scarcely admit the influence of religious opinions, in a man who had not the faculty of receiving deep convictions.

Knowing how easily he was persuaded to believe any thing that he hoped, the family of Guise scrupled not to entertain him with the most extravagant and even contradictory expectations. At one moment, with the advice and assistance of the Papal legate, they led him to believe, that if he shewed himself zealously devoted to the Roman Catholic faith, he might obtain the dissolution of his marriage with Jeanne d'Albret, and exchange the jewelless crown of Navarre for the richer one of Scotland, by a marriage with the beautiful Mary Stuart. At another time they engaged the Spanish ambassador to enter into negotiations, apparently serious, for the cession of the island of Sardinia,* by the crown of Spain, as an equivalent for the important districts, which the Spanish monarchs had dismembered from the kingdom of Navarre. Nor did they fail to represent to him, that the young King of France and his brothers, being feeble and sickly of constitution, might be expected ere long to follow Francis II. to the grave, when his rights to the throne of France, indisputable in themselves, might be risked by the suspicion of heresy.† It is not

* Belleforests. Davila, &c. Memoires de la Maison de Bourbon.

† Auvigny.

necessary in this place to inquire which of all these inducements proved the most powerful with the King of Navarre. It is sufficient to say that his weak mind gave way before the artifices of the Roman Catholic party; and after considerable doubt and hesitation, he joined himself to the Triumvirate, and became, for the short remainder of his life, a mere tool in the hands of the house of Lorraine.

Apostacy is always bigoted, and the King of Navarre now sought eagerly to force his wife to enter the Roman Catholic church, and to shake off all connexion with the Protestants. The Colloquy of Poissy, however, had produced a very different effect upon her mind from that which it is said to have wrought upon her husband.* The reasoning of Theodore Beza seemed to her perfectly conclusive; and her grief, we are told, was poignant at seeing her husband abandon what she considered the true faith, and place himself in the ranks of its persecutors. An effort which he made towards the end of the year 1561, to force her to attend the mass, decided her conduct; and she determined to retire into Bearn for the purpose of following in peace the ceremonies of her own religion.

The Princess herself was suffered to depart, and her daughter the Princess Catherine was permitted to accompany her; but Anthony of Bourbon, and those with whom he was now allied, insisted that the young Prince should be left behind, to be educated at the court of France. The strong tendency towards the

* Brantome. Benault.

Protestant faith which the Queen-mother shewed at this time, rendered the sacrifice required of Jeanne d'Albret less painful to her than it might otherwise have been; and, in quitting Paris, she left her son under the charge of a learned man, named La Gaucherie, himself firmly attached to the Reformed religion. About this period also, or a little later, Victor Cayet, who afterwards became his chronologer, was first placed in attendance upon his person, and from him we derive some of the most interesting facts regarding the early life of the future monarch.

We learn that he was at this time a very lively, quick, and beautiful boy, full of vigor and activity of mind and body, apt to receive instruction, and giving every promise of attaining great proficiency in letters.* La Gaucherie took every pains to render the study of the learned languages agreeable to him; not teaching him in the ordinary method by filling his mind with long and laborious rules, difficult to remember, and still more difficult to apply, but following more the common course by which we acquire our maternal language, and storing his mind with a number of Greek and Latin sentences, which the Prince afterwards wrote down and analysed.† The first work which he seems to have translated regularly was Cæsar's Commentaries; a version of several books of which was seen by the biographer of the Duke of Nevers in his own handwriting; and his familiarity with the Greek was fre-

* Memoires du Duc de Nevers.

† Chronologie Novenaire.

quently shewn in the sports and pastimes of the court, where mottoes in the learned languages were frequently required.

It is customary for the historians and eulogists of great men, to point out, after their acts have rendered them famous, those slight indications which sometimes in youth give promise of future eminence; and thus, we are told, the favorite motto of Henry in his boyhood, was ἢ νικᾶν ἢ ἀποθανεῖν to conquer, or to die. The fact, however, is worthy of remark, not so much perhaps, because it shewed the boy's aspirations for military glory, as because his frequent use of this sentence seems to have created some uneasiness in the mind of Catherine de Medicis, who forbade his masters to teach him such apophthegms for the future, saying that they were only calculated to render him obstinate.

It is not probable that the Queen-mother would have taken notice of such a sentence on the lips of any ordinary child; but it is evident, not only from the accounts of those biographers, whose works were composed after the Prince of Bearn had risen into renown as King of France, but by letters written while he was yet in extreme youth, that there was something in his whole manner and demeanor, which impressed all those who knew him, with a conviction of his future greatness. We shall have hereafter to cite several of these epistles, which give an accurate picture of the Prince at the age of thirteen years; but before that time he had undergone a long course of desultory instruction. At one period his educa-

tion was carried on in the chateau of Vincennes, where he remained for more than a year with the royal children; and at another we find him studying in the college of Navarre, together with the Duke of Anjou, who afterwards became king under the name of Henry III., and with Henry, eldest son of the Duke of Guise, against whom he was destined to take so prominent a part in arms. At this early age, however, no enmity or rivalry was apparent between the three Princes; but on the contrary, to use the words of the memoirs of Nevers, the three Henrys had the same affection and the same pleasures, and always displayed for one another, so uncommon a degree of complaisance, that not the slightest dispute took place between them, during the whole time they were at the college. In regard to the course of instruction pursued with the Prince of Bearn we have no farther information, and only know that he acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Latin language to translate with ease all the best writers of Rome; and that he applied himself, though apparently with no great perseverance, to the art of drawing, in which he displayed a considerable degree of talent, the Duke of Nevers, or his biographer,* having seen an antique vase which he had sketched in pen and ink with a mas-

* It does not appear clear to me whether the person speaking, in the part of the memoirs of Nevers in which this fact is mentioned, be Jomberville or Nevers himself. I am inclined, however, to suppose it is the former. The same difficulty presents itself in many other passages.

terly hand, and under which he had written, *Opus principis otiosi.*

Henry was not long permitted to carry on his studies at the college of Navarre, though Catherine de Medicis continued to detain him for some years at the court of France, as a sort of honorable hostage for the conduct of Jeanne d'Albret, of whose genius and commanding character she lived in constant apprehension. Before he was withdrawn from that institution, however, various events of importance took place, strongly affecting the condition of France, which I must now proceed to detail.

The adhesion of the King of Navarre to the party of the Triumvirate alarmed the Queen-mother, and caused her to throw herself completely upon the Prince de Condé for support. Her principal counsellors at this time were the famous Chancellor de l'Hospital and Montluc bishop of Valence; the former, one of the greatest lawyers and most upright magistrates that France ever produced; the latter, a prelate of high talents and great skill, who, conscious of the corruptions and superstitions of the Roman Church, was anxiously desirous of seeing a reformation effected therein, without shaking the foundations of the whole fabric. Both of these distinguished personages were suspected by the Popish party of favoring the Protestant religion; and by their advice a new edict was issued in the month of January, 1562, by which the edict of July was virtually overthrown and full liberty of conscience granted to the followers of the Re-

formed Church. The principal regulations contained in this famous decree were as follows: that all Protestant bodies, who had taken possession of any Roman Catholic churches, should immediately restore them to the ecclesiastics whom they had ejected; that the Protestants should abstain from the demolition of crosses and images, and all other scandalous and seditious acts, which they had been too much accustomed to commit; that they should not attempt to hold their assemblies in the interior of towns, but that they should be permitted, for the purposes of preaching and prayer, to assemble where they pleased without the walls, unmolested. They were, however, strictly forbidden to appear in these assemblies with any other than the ordinary arms of sword and dagger, carried by all gentlemen in those days; but at the same time strict injunctions were laid upon all the royal officers, to protect the Huguenots in the peaceable exercise of their religion, and to punish severely those, of either of the two religious parties, who should attempt to injure or disturb the other. The organisation of the Protestant population, as a military body, was also strictly forbidden; and the ministers of the Reformed church were directed, for very obvious reasons, to observe, in cases of marriage, the existing laws regarding consanguinity. They were also called upon to swear that they would obey the edict, and that they would not preach any thing contrary to the pure word of God, as expressed in the Nicene creed, and the canonical books of the

Old and New Testaments. Several regulations were added to secure the due execution of the law, and to prevent, if possible, any hostile collision between the followers of the two religions.* This famous edict of January, was decided upon by a body of deputies from all the parliaments of the realm, assembled at St. Germain on the seventeenth of January, 1562, and solemnly announced in the following month; but it was with great difficulty that the Parliament of Paris consented to register it; and even then that body attached to the decree, a note, which virtually formed a protest against it. The name of the King of Navarre appears in the preamble, as one of those by whose advice it was given; but the Constable and the Duke of Guise were not present at the deliberations, Guise having quitted the court of France in apparent indignation at the favor shewn by Catherine de Medicis to the Huguenots, and the Constable refusing to attend at a conference, the object of which he did not approve.†

Guise, however, was not inactive, although he seemed to be merely amusing himself with the pleasures of the country. He had now secured the support of the two most distinguished persons in the King's council; popular favor had long been his; and by putting himself at the head of the Roman Catholic party, he had ensured the zealous co-operation of the great majority of the nation.

* Aubigné, lib. ii.

† Auvigny, tome x and xi.

All the astute energies of the Papal court, were in busy operation to second his schemes; and the eyes of the Spanish ambassador, who had played a very conspicuous part in French politics ever since the death of Henry II., were occupied in watching the movements of his enemies, and taking advantage of every accident to advance his interests. Knowing, however, that arrayed against him, were to be found, the cunning of Catherine de Medicis, the wisdom and skill of Coligni, the fire and genius of Condé, and the vigor and perseverance of D'Andelot, with a large body of men ready at any moment to die in defence of their religious faith, and eager to destroy their oppressors, he endeavored to give overpowering preponderance to his own party, by the treasonable and unjustifiable act of negotiating with a foreign power, even in a time of internal peace, for armed assistance in his efforts to restore himself to that exuberant degree of authority which was always the object of his ambition. How long the negotiations had been going on, or how far they were carried, will probably never be known; but it is certain that one of the Duke's emissaries was stopped by order of the Admiral de Coligni, on his way back from Spain, disguised as a pilgrim, and that in a hollow staff, which he carried in his hand, were found despatches from Philip II., which clearly implicated the Duke of Guise in acts which amounted to nothing short of high treason.*

* Vie de Coligni.

Various other proofs of the Duke's negotiations with foreigners, are said to have been in the hands of the Protestant Princes; but, instead of boldly accusing their enemies of the criminal proceedings which they were carrying on, the party of the Prince de Condé had recourse to similar acts, and entertained a correspondence with the Reformers of Germany, in order to obtain assistance in case of need. This was not the only error committed by the French Huguenots. Elated by the Colloquy of Poissy, by the favor of the court, and by a letter which the Queen-mother ventured to write to the Pope, demanding, in terms in no degree ambiguous, the reformation of the principal abuses in the church which had been so loudly denounced by the disciples of Calvin and Luther, the chiefs of the Huguenot party assumed a high and authoritative tone, and the inferior Protestants did not scruple to irritate the Popish population by acts of intemperate violence. Thus, in the month of December, 1561, the church of St. Medard, with the Romish priests and congregation which it contained, was tumultuously invaded by a party of Calvinists from a neighboring conventicle, in consequence of the ringing of the vesper bell during the sermon of one of their ministers. It is alleged that some distinct insult was offered by the officers of the church to the members of the Huguenot congregation, who begged them to desist; but it is clear that no provocation, sufficient even

to palliate the conduct of the Protestants, was given, before they rushed into the church, and committed some of the most scandalous outrages which had ever taken place in Paris. Several persons were killed and many others wounded, so that justice could not overlook the crime committed, and several of the ringleaders were arrested and executed.

The Roman Catholics, on their part, did not fail to display as furious a spirit; and, besides much bloodshed which took place in several parts of France, the Popish preachers scrupled not to inculcate the most dangerous doctrines affecting the crown itself. One of these personages, of the name of Tanquerel, sustained in public that the Pope had a right to depose heretic princes; and, although he was prosecuted for his audacity, the protection of the Catholic party turned aside from his head the punishment he merited.

During January and February, it became evident to all men, that the struggle between the two great parties in the state must soon come to the decision of arms; and, while the court, now ruled by the Prince de Condé and the Admiral de Coligni, retired to Monceaux in Brie, the Prince, taking advantage of the absence of the Duke of Guise, and probably not without the consent of the Queen-mother, remained in Paris, endeavoring to strengthen the Huguenot party in the capital.* D'Andelot,

* Some writers assert that Condé did not enter Paris till after Guise had arrived.

and others attached to Condé, we are assured by Roman Catholic writers, proceeded, in manifest violation of the edict of January, to raise considerable bodies of troops in various parts of the neighboring country; till at length the King of Navarre, alarmed at the menacing aspect of the Protestants, and unequal to support the weight of great affairs, despatched messengers to the Duke of Guise at Joinville, beseeching him to return immediately to Paris, and aid in ejecting his brother from the capital.

The Protestant writers, on the contrary, assure us most solemnly that the leaders of their party had not yet taken arms, and were most reluctant to have recourse to such a measure; so that, even after the whole face of the country was stained with the blood of their brethren, it required the strongest persuasions and entreaties to induce Coligni to draw the sword. They also assert that the object for which the Duke of Guise was called to Paris, was simply to annul the edict of January, and to deprive the Protestants of the toleration which they enjoyed.* It is scarcely possible to arrive at the exact truth, in a matter where the most violent party spirit is busy on all sides to distort the facts; but certainly the words of the Duke of Guise, which are reported by both Huguenot and Papistical writers with very little variation, would seem to shew that his party entertained the determination of compelling the council, by force, to recall the decree in favor of the Protestants. After the massacre of Vassi, which we are about to

* Aubigné.

speak of, he is said to have laid his hand on the hilt of his sword, exclaiming: "Patience! This shall rescind that detestable edict."*

When the messenger of the King of Navarre reached the Duke of Guise at Joinville, that Prince had just returned from a conference with some of the German leaders at Saverne, whither he had gone for the express purpose of detaching them from the cause of the French Protestants; and the whole of his movements at this time display a calm and systematic course, towards the re-attainment of that supreme authority in France, which he had possessed during the reign of Francis II., raising high our opinion of his political skill, but leaving no possible doubt of his purposes, or his motives. No sooner did he learn the state of Paris, and the King of Navarre's desire for his presence, than he mounted his horse, and, accompanied by the Cardinal, his brother,† a considerable body of gentlemen attached to his household, and two companies of cavalry, his right to retain which, in time of peace, and after he had been deprived of the Lieutenant-generalcy of the kingdom, does not appear, he set out for the capital, passing by the small town of Vassi on his way.

It unfortunately happened, that as the multitude of valets and attendants, with which the Duke

* Some writers place this speech before the massacre of Vassi; but, as I only receive it as an indication of the Duke's views and feelings, the question of when it was spoken is of no great importance.

† Davila. Aubigné. The Journal de Bruslart states, that when he entered Paris, Guise was accompanied by at least three thousand horse.

marched, entered the town, a Protestant assembly was descried, consisting of some thousands of people. The servants ran up to hear the preaching, in a manner which even the Roman Catholics admit to have been tumultuous and disorderly. Little doubt can exist that they went with feelings of contempt and hatred, and that they proceeded to insult, though, perhaps, not to injury. The Protestants repelled them with a shower of stones; the Duke's attendants then took to arms, and the Duke cast himself into the crowd, in order, we are assured, to restore peace. In the attempt, however, he was wounded in the face by a stone; and it is easy to suppose, that at the sight of the blood of their leader, the Roman Catholic party lost all further restraint. The Cardinal then ordered Monsieur de Brosse, who commanded the cavalry, to charge; and a terrible massacre of the unarmed Protestants ensued, in which, according to the statement of Aubigné, three hundred persons fell by the edge of the sword.*

The Duke, whose wound was trifling, pursued his way; and the news of this bloody act, which preceded him, only caused him to be received in Paris with the greater honor and distinction. All sorts of applause were bestowed upon him by the Roman Catholics for this deed, which it is probable he did not intend to commit: the King of Navarre and the mem-

* Davila only admits the number to have been sixty, and Belleforests quietly passes over the event with the words "Si furent ils estrillez gentiment."—*Mem. de Condé*, tom. 3.

bers of the University went out to meet him; the people shouted, "Long live the Duke of Guise;" and twenty-nine towns in France took example by what had occurred at Vassi, and murdered in crowds the unfortunate followers of the Reformation. Every barbarity was added that superstitious fanaticism could suggest, and we are even assured that the infant children of the slaughtered Protestants were sold at Tours and other places for a crown.*

A cry for redress rose up from every part of the kingdom; and a minister of the name of Francourt and Theodore Beza, were sent to the court, as deputies, to represent with all the powers of their eloquence the iniquities which had been committed, and to demand security for the future, if not vengeance for the past. The council of Charles IX. did not venture to justify the barbarous acts which had been perpetrated; but the King of Navarre took upon himself that odious task, and, with the true zeal of apostacy, put himself foremost in the ranks of the persecutors. Beza crushed the weak Prince under reproaches, but was forced to retire without any satisfaction. In the meantime, the Roman Catholic party became somewhat alarmed at the aspect assumed by the Huguenots. The Princes assembled in Paris affected to discountenance the butcheries that were daily committed, but at the same time they forced Condé, by their superior power, to evacuate the capital; and the Constable Montmorenci, at the head of a body of troops, as if going to battle, issued forth

* Aubigné, lib. iii.

into the suburbs, pulled down the meeting houses of the Protestants, burning the seats and the pulpits amidst the acclamations of the people.*

The Queen-mother, terrified at the ascendancy of the house of Guise, and probably not ignorant that language was held by the Triumvirate in regard to herself, of a disrespectful and menacing character, took alarm for her own life and liberty, and for the throne of her son. She knew the overpowering ambition of the Duke of Guise, the weakness of the King of Navarre, the bigotry of the Constable, and she saw no resource, but to cast herself into the arms of the Huguenot party, to put the King at their head, and to counterbalance the advantage possessed by the Guises in having the religion of the majority upon their side, by exciting the general loyalty of the French people in defence of their monarch. That this plan would have succeeded, if she had been enabled to put it in execution, few can doubt. Many of the most zealous Roman Catholics would have sacrificed their zeal for their religion, rather than the chivalrous spirit of attachment to the throne, which at that time existed in France. The energies of others would have been paralyzed by the prospect of fighting against their King; Montmorenci himself would not have ventured to draw the sword in opposition to the royal authority; and the Duke of Guise would probably have seen himself abandoned by some, and only timidly supported by others. But

* Belleforests.

unfortunate circumstances, and the only instance of tardy caution that the Prince de Condé was ever known to display, frustrated this well-conceived plan.

As soon as Catherine de Medicis heard of the triumphal entrance of the Duke of Guise into Paris, and the measures adopted by the Triumvirate, she despatched a letter to the Prince de Condé, beseeching him "to hasten to the deliverance of the mother and her child."* She wrote letter after letter to the Swiss Cantons, entreating them to send aid to the Protestants of France;† and in the course of the events which followed, during the next three or four days, she sent no less than seven epistles to Condé,‡ begging him to come to her aid without a moment's delay. At the same time, she retired from Monceaux to Fontainebleau, in order to be at a greater distance from the Duke of Guise and his faction.

In the meanwhile Condé had dispatched messengers to D'Andelot, Coligni, and all the other leaders of the Protestant party, requiring their immediate presence with all the troops they could collect; but, in retiring from Paris, instead of keeping as near the Queen as possible, and directing the advance of the Huguenot troops towards a spot whence they could give succor to Catherine without loss of time, he pro-

* Brantome.

† Memoirs de Tavannes, page 249.

‡ Mèmoirs de Condé, tome iii. page 213.

ceeded first to Meaux, a small town upon the Marne, and thence to his castle of la Ferté, still farther up the same river. What was his motive is very difficult to discover, for we find that about this time D'Andelot and the Admiral, with a number of the Protestant leaders, were collected at Chatillon sur Loing, quite on the other side of Fontainebleau.* Time was thus lost which could never be regained; and though a small body of troops would have been sufficient to escort the court to a place of safety, Condé waited to collect an army, when every hour was worth a thousand men.

The Duke of Guise was more active, and his party was in a better state of preparation. Either discovering or divining the intentions of the Queen, he took counsel with Montmorenci and the King of Navarre; and it was determined to proceed in force to Fontainebleau, for the purpose of bringing the young King and his brothers to Paris. On the appearance of the three leaders at the palace, Catherine, though terrified, did not lose her presence of mind. She remonstrated, she argued, she endeavored to gain time; she even persuaded the King of Navarre, who was first sent to announce to her the determination which had been taken of removing the King to Paris, that there was both indecency and danger in the proceeding to which he had lent himself. But the bold ambition of the Duke of Guise, and the stern determi-

* Aubigné.

nation of Montmorenci, frustrated her arts, and overruled the weakness of their companion. She was informed by those who were now the dictators of her fate, that not an hour's delay would be granted to her, and that she must decide at once, either upon seeing her children removed from her care, or upon accompanying them to Paris.

As Catherine always acted from expediency, and allowed conviction to have little influence in her conduct, she submitted at once to necessity; and, though she remonstrated loudly against the violence employed, she professed her strong attachment to the Roman Catholic faith, and only objected to its standard being raised as the ensign of civil war. She agreed to accompany the Triumvirate to Paris; and before her decision was formed, the baggage of the royal household was packed up and on the way. She was then forced to follow with her children in the train of the Duke of Guise; the young King weeping in her arms, and the Queen herself shedding tears from time to time, plainly indicating her indignation at the conduct of the Triumvirate, and her grief at seeing all her expectations frustrated. She found the opportunity, however, before she was forced from Fontainebleau, of writing once more to the Prince de Condé, giving him notice that she and the King had been forcibly seized upon by the leaders of the adverse party, and were, in fact, captives in their hands;* and she thus gave him direct encourage-

* Davila.

ment to oppose the Triumvirate in arms. Her whole conduct on the road told the same tale to those who saw her; but the Duke of Guise, having obtained his object, scoffed alike at her tears and remonstrances, merely observing, that "an advantage, whether it is won by love or by force, is not the less an advantage."

In the meantime, Condé, having been joined by a number of his friends and supporters, was advancing upon Fontainebleau at the head of three thousand horse; and the first news he seems to have had of the movements of his enemies was given him by the Queen's letter, which he received in the midst of his march. Suddenly drawing up his horse, he remained for a moment or two in consternation; but on the Admiral, who was at some distance behind, coming up, the Prince exclaimed, with a sigh, "We are now so far in the water that we must drink or be drowned."

After a short consultation it was determined to gain the town of Orleans, and make it the *Place d'armes* of the Huguenot party. D'Andelot had instructions to hurry thither, and render himself master of the town; and the only obstacle in the way of the Prince himself seemed to be the passage of the river Seine. Marching boldly up to the walls of Paris, however, he threatened the capital itself, and by this daring manœuvre gained command of the bridge of St. Cloud, which was willingly granted to him by the terrified Parisians.

The party of the Duke of Guise, by making use of the name of the Queen-mother, in negotiating with the Prince during a short halt at Angerville, now endeavored to delay Condé on the march, while troops were secretly introduced into Orleans to wrest it from the hands of D'Andelot, who had got possession of the gate of St. John. But the Prince having received intelligence that his friend, with only three hundred men, was actually engaged with a superior enemy in the streets of Orleans, and that the numerous Huguenots in the place dared not shew themselves in arms on account of the Catholic forces which were flocking up every hour, cast away all other considerations, and putting his cavalry into a gallop, arrived at the scene of combat just in time to save D'Andelot from defeat. The party of the Duke of Guise was soon driven out, the Huguenots appeared in multitudes; and Condé established his head-quarters in the city, publishing a proclamation, by which he announced that he had taken arms for the deliverance of the King and the Queen-mother, who were captives in the hands of the house of Lorraine.

We are told by a Roman Catholic writer that the reply of the family of Guise to the accusations of the Protestant party was very simple. It certainly was so, if that which is grossly false can deserve the name of simplicity; for it is as clearly proved, as the most undoubted fact of history, that Catherine and her son had been carried to Paris against their will, and

were at that moment as much under restraint as if they had been in the Bastille. Yet the Duke of Guise and his companions issued an edict in the King's name declaring them to be perfectly free.

Notwithstanding the boldness of the stroke by which the Triumvirate possessed themselves of the persons of the young King and Queen-mother, from some cause, of which we are not aware, doubt and irresolution seems to have taken possession of the councils of that party, from the moment of the seizure of Orleans by the Prince de Condé. It is probable that the very different motives and interests of the persons combined unnaturally together in the faction which held the King in their hands, had some effect in producing this vacillation; nor is it impossible that the skill and cunning of Catherine de Medicis, supported by the wisdom of the Chancellor de l'Hospital, were exerted strenuously to avert, if possible, the greatest evil that can afflict the body politic. The opinion of de l'Hospital, however, was overruled in almost all instances, and had merely the effect of making the leaders hesitate, and drawing their anger and hatred upon himself.

The Prince de Condé, in the meantime, published manifesto after manifesto, wrote letters to all the principal towns and parliaments of France, to the Emperor, and to most of the Princes of Germany, formed a council for himself in Orleans, and, by a well conducted series of operations, drew an immense number of noblemen and gentlemen into his party. He likewise got possession of Rouen, Dieppe

and Havre, Blois, Poitiers, Tours, Vendome, Valence, and Lyons. A number of other towns, though they did not entirely fall into the hands of the Huguenots, were divided between them and the Papists; in some instances the citadels being possessed by the Roman Catholics, and the city by the Protestants, and in others the reverse; while an immense number of fortified houses and villages, scattered all over the face of the country, declared in favor of the Reformers.

Money was wanting on both parts; for, as we have already shewn, the finances of the state were at the lowest possible point, and the private fortune of the Huguenot nobles, though they all contributed to the utmost of their power, was but a feeble resource in carrying on the great operations of a war. Condé, however, had recourse to means for supplying funds which but exasperated the hatred of the Papists, seizing upon all the money contained in the treasury of the churches, and taking possession of the plate, and images of gold and silver, with which the ecclesiastical buildings of the Roman Catholics were richly endowed, for the purpose of coining money. In many of the towns which had been taken, large stores of ammunition, cannon, and other weapons of war were found, and brought to Orleans; so that, in fact, the Huguenots were prepared to commence the campaign at an earlier period than their opponents.

It must be remarked, as one of the peculiar characteristics of the war that ensued, that

during the whole course of the military movements, negotiations were going on, and truces were granted every day. Taking advantage of the natural unwillingness of the Huguenot party to strike the first blow, the Duke of Guise and his friends contrived to gain time, by means of specious offers, while a general summons to all the Roman Catholic gentlemen of France, brought daily reinforcements to the army of the Triumvirate.

At length both parties took the field; the royal troops under the command of the King of Navarre, amounting to four thousand horse, and six thousand foot; the Protestant army led by the Prince de Condé and the Admiral, consisting of three thousand cavalry, and six thousand infantry. The Huguenot leaders, however, fixed themselves in a strong position, four leagues from Orleans, which town was menaced by the royal forces, and the King of Navarre hesitated to attack them. In this state of affairs, the Queen-mother was brought to the Roman Catholic camp; and an interview took place between her and the Prince de Condé, half way between the two armies. The particulars of the conference are so differently reported by the historians of the time, that it is impossible to arrive at any certainty regarding them. All that we really know, is, that after some angry speeches on both sides, the conversation terminated by a jest. The Queen, looking at the followers of the Prince, whose arms were covered with white cassocks, observed, "Your people are

millers, my good cousin." "That is to drive your asses, madam," replied Condé; and thus they parted: but as a number of friends and relations ranged on opposite sides, there met, perhaps, for the last time, it was remarked that the gentlemen, who had accompanied the Queen and the Prince de Condé, separated from each other with tears in their eyes.

Each faction now denounced the other in the most violent terms. Condé still insisted that the King and the Queen were held prisoners by the Triumvirate,* the members of which, he declared, were animated alone by views of ambition and self-interest, and by no zeal for religion, or for the good of the state. He recited in his manifestoes the massacres which had been committed by them or their partizans; he pointed out that all their edicts and proclamations were dictated by the Papal nuncio and the Spanish ambassador; he asserted that they had threatened to exile the Queen, or to put her to death; and he demanded as the condition of his immediate submission, that the Duke of Guise, the Constable, and Marshal St. André, should quit the court, and give security not to return till the King reached the period of his majority. On these terms he offered to lay down his arms, and to retire at once to one of his own houses, giving his eldest son, the Marquis de Conti, and his other children, as hostages for his future conduct.†

The Guises, on their part, replied, putting forward the maintenance of the Catholic religion as their

* Castelnau, tome i. liv. iii. † Auvigny, tome iii.

only motive ; and, after some further negotiations, the Triumvirate on the one hand offered to quit the realm, while the Prince de Condé proposed to place himself in the hands of the Queen and the King of Navarre, as a guarantee for the submission of the Protestants. It was subsequently determined that the leaders of both parties should leave the kingdom, and that entire liberty of conscience should be granted to all men; but, at a third interview between the Prince and Catherine de Medicis, a tumult took place amongst Condé's followers, on the question of his quitting the realm being discussed; and, declaring that they would not permit him to abandon them, they carried him off apparently by force, placed him on horseback, and brought him back to the camp.

It has generally been supposed, that the Prince was not an unwilling victim of this apparent violence, but we have no absolute proof of the fact; though it is clear that he was soon persuaded once more to take the command of the Huguenot army, at the head of which he attempted to surprise the royal camp, during the temporary absence of the Constable and the Duke of Guise, who had retired to favor the negotiations for peace. Misled by his guides he failed in the enterprise; and a series of manœuvres followed, with which it is not necessary to embarrass this history.

While so much time had been spent in negotiations, the party of the Duke of Guise had not been idle in strengthening its military means;

six thousand Swiss, and a body of German cavalry, under the Rhinegrave, were already on their march to support the Triumvirate; nor can it be doubted, that if the stipulations made in the conference between Catherine and the Prince had been carried into effect, they would have been violated almost as soon as made. Condé would have remained a prisoner in the hands of his enemies, and Guise, at the head of a large army, would, once more, have ruled the country.

The great addition which the forces of the Triumvirate now received, overawed their opponents, and drove them to apply eagerly to the Protestant Princes of Germany, and to the Queen of England, for the means of carrying on the war. A body of German auxilaries were already enlisted, and about to march; and Elizabeth of England offered to send to their aid eight thousand men completely equipped; but only on condition that they would put into her hands the town of Havre, both as a sure retreat for her troops in case of a reverse, and as a guarantee for the restitution of Calais. She also required that English garrisons should be received in Dieppe and Rouen. To these hard conditions the Protestant leaders were induced to consent; and, not having troops sufficient to keep the field against the superior army of the enemy, while two of their number were sent to England to conclude the treaty with Elizabeth, D'Andelot and the Prince de Porcian, hastened into Germany to take the command of the forces raised for their service in that country, and

the other leaders were distributed amongst the principal towns which they had gained, in order to defend them till the foreign auxiliaries should arrive. Many of the noblemen, however, of the party, justly alarmed at the idea of introducing English troops into the kingdom, abandoned the cause in which they had before been zealous; and the Duke of Guise lost no time in taking advantage of the preponderance which he had acquired, by the temporary superiority of his forces. Not venturing to attack Orleans, he directed his first efforts against Blois, which was taken and pillaged without the slightest attempt to restrain the soldiery. Tours capitulated immediately afterwards upon favorable conditions; Poitiers was captured in three days by Marshal St. André, in consequence of the base treachery of the governor, who turned the cannon of the castle upon the defenders of the town. Bourges surrendered after considerable resistance; and it was determined by the Roman Catholic leaders to follow up their successes by the siege of Rouen.

The treaty between the Huguenot chiefs and the Queen of England had now become public; and, whatever might be the advantages which they expected ultimately to derive from it, the benefit was more than counterbalanced by the odium, which the principal articles drew down upon their heads, and by the violent indignation which it excited in the breast of Catherine de Medicis. That Princess, alarmed for the safety of her son's kingdom, and apprehensive lest, under her government, the nation

which for so many years had retained possession of a French fortress, should once more gain footing in the country, now detached herself entirely from the party, she had hitherto undoubtedly favored, and joined herself in good faith to those she had previously regarded as her enemies. From this moment she never sincerely attached herself to any of the Protestant leaders, and always regarded them with a jealous and distrustful eye, even while she took advantage of their influence, to counterbalance that of the house of Lorraine. It was clearly with her full consent and approbation, that Coligni, D'Andelot, and their brother Odet de Chatillon,* were declared rebels by the parliament of Paris; and the determination of besieging Rouen, immediately after the fall of Bourges, is also very generally attributed to her anxious desire to drive the English out of France. By this time, Havre was in the hands of Elizabeth's troops, and although the governments of Dieppe and Rouen had been left in the hands of two French noblemen, the British garrison which each contained was too strong for the governor to have any real command in the place. The enterprise against Rouen was peculiarly agreeable to the great body of the French nobility; and although the more experienced members of the council, strongly urged the necessity of attacking Orleans in the first place, the wishes of the Queen

* Formerly known as the Cardinal de Chatillon and Bishop of Beauvais, but who had now renounced the Roman Catholic religion, and taken the name of Count of Beauvais.

at length prevailed, and on the twenty-fifth of September, the royalist army, as I shall now call that of the Triumvirate, assembled at Darnetal within two leagues of the Norman capital.

In the mean time, careful preparations had been made for the defence of the place. The Count of Montgomery, from whose hand Henry II. had met his death, had cast himself into the town; and supported by two thousand English troops, twelve hundred regular French infantry, four squadrons of cavalry, more than a hundred Protestant gentlemen, and an immense crowd of armed citizens, he set the royal forces at defiance, and hoped to hold out the city, till the approach of winter drove the enemy from the field. He neglected no precautions, however; and a half moon, which he caused to be constructed on one of the neighboring heights, gave great trouble to the besieging force, and greatly delayed their progress in the siege. The attack began on the side of Mount St. Catherine, on the summit of which, an old monastery, strongly fortified, afforded a sort of citadel to the besieged. For some time, all the efforts of the royalist army proved vain against this fort; but the over-confidence of the Huguenots proved their destruction. Though they interrupted the progress of the assailants, by frequent and vigorous sallies, so certain did they feel of the safety of Mount St. Catherine, that a great part of the garrison in the monastery, usually quitted it about mid-day, to enjoy themselves with their friends and companions in

the town. This fact having been discovered by Monsieur de Villars, brother-in-law of Davila the historian, he communicated the intelligence to the Duke of Guise and Montmorenci, and the fortress was accordingly taken by surprise, during the absence of a number of those, whose duty it was to defend it. The suburb of St. Hilary, which had also been strongly fortified, was then destroyed by an incessant fire from Mount St. Catherine; and Montgomery, seeing the rapid progress of the assailants, applied to his English allies in Havre, to send him immediate succor. Neither delay nor hesitation took place in acceding to his demand, and vessels were instantly sent up the Seine, charged with money, provisions, ammunition, and a strong reinforcement of British foot.

The royalist army attempted to obstruct the approach of the flotilla, by a stockade and by a number of vessels filled with sand and sunk in the river, joining the whole together by enormous chains, while the batteries commanded the line of advance, and fire-rafts were prepared to destroy the English ships, if they ventured to come near. Notwithstanding these terrible obstacles, the determined gallantry of the British commanders proved successful. The stockade was attacked under a tremendous cannonade; and though some of the ships were burnt, the rest broke through the chains; and a reinforcement of seven hundred infantry, with a large quantity of ammunition was thrown into Rouen.

Nevertheless the attack was continued with the utmost fury, and the approaches having been carried on with great skill by Italian engineers, a practicable breach was effected in the curtain, between the gates of St. Hilary and Martinville. Three regiments were ordered to prepare to storm; but while they were under arms in the trenches, the King of Navarre, who had just reviewed them preparatory to the attack, received a musket ball in the shoulder, and instantly fell. For some time he was supposed to be dead, and the assault was suspended in consequence; but he shortly after recovered his senses, and lingered for some days, till death put an end to his sufferings at the neighboring village of Andelys, on the seventeenth of November, 1562. His family always believed, and Henry IV. himself continued to assert, that the ball which caused his father's death did not come from the besieged town, but rather from the royalist camp.* It is certain, however, that this event produced great consternation in the army, and that the proposed assault upon the breach, was in consequence deferred till the following day. The cannonade was continued more furiously than

* Memoires de Nevers. It is not necessary to point out the errors committed by the good Bishop Perefixe, which are numerous regarding the life of Henry IV., and have been copied by many other authors. He places the retirement of Jeanne d'Albret from the court of France at the period of the death of her husband, but Cayet and others, personally attached to the House of Navarre, shew that she had retired into Bearn long before.

ever; Catherine herself appeared on horseback in the trenches; and, on the twenty-sixth of October, Rouen was taken by storm, and given up to all the fury of the soldiery, for two days, every sort of crime and barbarity being committed in the town.

The Count of Montgomery contrived to effect his escape in one of the English vessels which had broken through the stockade; having, with the greatest coolness and devotion, placed his wife and children on board, before he quitted the town, which was then in full possession of the enemy.

We are assured that the Duke of Guise and Catherine de Medicis, had hesitated long and anxiously ere they would consent to the storming of the city.* Rouen was at that period one of the most important places of the kingdom, both by the number and riches of its inhabitants, and by its extensive commerce; and the pillage and destruction which inevitably follow a successful assault, was naturally dreaded by the besiegers, though their conduct after the capture of the town, does not permit us to suppose, that any feelings of pity for the citizens had a share in their reluctance. The Duke of Guise undoubtedly did all that was in his power to prevent the irregularities, which take place on such occasions. He harangued the troops before they marched to the attack, he endeavored to restrain them, both by exciting their fears, and by holding out the prospect of full compensation

* Anquetil. Castelnau, lib. iii. cap. 13.

for the loss of their plunder. But the effort was vain, and probably on no occasion was more merciless cruelty displayed, more brutal licentiousness, or more fierce rapacity. Four thousand persons are said to have been slaughtered in cold blood;* and the only body of troops which shewed any thing like subordination was the Swiss infantry,† famous at all times, alike for their courage, their devotion, and their discipline. Amongst the many extraordinary and lamentable events which took place during the siege of Rouen, we cannot refrain from pausing for a moment upon the strange fate of a Protestant gentleman named Francis Sevile.‡

A few days before the fall of the city, this officer was wounded on the face by the shot of an arquebus, and having fallen, apparently dead, was carried away and buried with fifteen or sixteen others. At night his servant brought a horse for his master at the foot of the rampart, where, meeting the Count of Montgomery, he was informed that Sevile was dead and buried. The groom, an old and faithful servant of the house, insisted upon having the body to carry back to the relations of the dead officer; and Montgomery accordingly sent one

* Aubigné. Castelnau, who was present, says the pillage continued eight days. † Castelnau.

‡ Anquetil spells this name Civil. I do not know why; but I have adopted the orthography of Aubigné, who knew this gentleman personally, and declares that he had seen him write his name.

of his suite to shew him where the corpses had been interred. The groom immediately caused them to be taken out of their hasty graves, but finding them so disfigured with wounds, blood, and clay, that it was impossible to recognise the features of any one, he replaced the bodies, and cast the earth lightly over them again. While returning to his quarters, a feeling of remorse at the careless manner in which he and his companions had reinterred the dead, took possession of him, and he returned to the spot to cover their remains more completely, lest the dogs should disturb their last resting place in the night. The sun had by this time set, but in recovering one of the bodies, he saw, by the light of the moon, a diamond ring, of a peculiar form, on the hand, and instantly by that token recognised the corpse of his master. Being carried to an inn, Sevile displayed some signs of life, and his faithful servant having called several surgeons, besought them to employ their skill upon his master. The number of wounded, however, did not allow them to occupy their time with a hopeless case, and they refused to give him any attention. The groom subsequently brought a physician, and one of Sevile's friends, who saw, that though three days had by this time elapsed since that officer had been buried as dead, he still breathed; and, his teeth having been forced open, some wine and other nourishment was administered to him. While they were laboring earnestly to restore him to health, the town was

stormed and taken; and a party of the enemy searching the house for Sevile's brother, whom they put to death without mercy, found the wounded man, and brutally threw him out of the window. He fell upon a dunghill, and some straw having been accidentally thrown over him, from a loft above, he remained three days in this unwholesome bed, where he was at length found, still living, by one of his cousins. He was then carried secretly out of the town, and under skilful treatment perfectly recovered. He lived for more than forty years after these events; and whenever called upon to sign his name, he wrote, "Francis Sevile, thrice dead, thrice buried, and thrice brought to life by the grace of God."*

Dieppe and Caen surrendered immediately after the fall of Rouen; and a large body of German troops in the service of the court, with a small French force, was detached to keep Havre in check. These reverses spread consternation amongst the Protestants assembled at Orleans; for though in the course of the civil war, which was proceeding with the most sanguinary barbarities on both sides in every province of the kingdom, some advantages had been gained by the Baron des Adrets and other Protestant leaders, yet Montluc was making immense progress in Guienne, and in Provence and Languedoc, the Count of Somariva, and the Count of Suza were carrying all before them.

* Aubigné. De Thou gives the same story with very slight variations; but the account of Aubigné who knew him, is to be preferred.

The whole land was desolated by the plundering propensities of the foreign troops enlisted on both parts, by the bloody fury of civil war, and by the fiery zeal of religious fanaticism. Not a town but was the scene of strange and horrible cruelties, not a village but its inhabitants were subjected to pillage and massacre and persecution; and reprisals in cold blood gave additional horrors to this lamentable scene of confusion and massacre.* The Roman Catholic part of the parliament of Rouen, having been re-established in its functions, immediately commenced the work of butchery, by putting to death a number of the Protestant gentlemen who had been captured and four counsellors from its own body;† and the parliament of Paris followed this sad example by the slaughter of a number of Protestants in the capital.

In retaliation for these acts, the Prince de Condé and his companions put to death two prisoners, who had been arrested a short time before; one of whom was a member of the parliament of Paris, and the other a monk, abbot of Gastines in Touraine.‡ This act, which absolute necessity could hardly justify, seems first to have awakened the Roman Catholic party to a sense of the dangers, as well as of the barbarity of the course they were pursuing; but it produced no effect upon the furious bigotry of the commanders in the different

* Montluc, Castelnau, Aubigné, Le Laboureur.

† Aubigné. ‡ Le Laboureur.

provinces, and a war of extermination was carried on; Montluc and his companions seeming to calculate with cold-blooded determination, that as the Protestants were in about the proportion of one, to a hundred Catholics, the party must be ultimately annihilated, if slaughtered wherever they were found.

The Huguenots, however, at the moment of the greatest depression, were re-invigorated by fresh hopes; and Condé found himself in a condition to take the field, when it was least expected. Nothing had reached him for some weeks but tidings of misfortune, when, late in October, or the beginning of November, La Rochefoucault joined him, after having taken two small towns, and gathered together the remains of a considerable force, which, under the command of the Count de Duras, had been defeated by Montluc. A great number of other Protestants also hastened to support the Prince de Condé from all parts of the south and west; but, although their arrival tended greatly to increase the strength of the army, the cause of their hasty junction with the Prince, was a sign of the weakness of the Protestant party in the provinces. The cities from which they came, were generally those which had shewn themselves very eager in the cause of the Reformation, so long as there appeared a prospect of establishing liberty of conscience by force of arms; but the disasters which had lately occurred, crowned by the fall of Rouen, had struck terror into all but the most devoted and the most enthu-

siastic. The white cassock, the distinguishing sign of the Protestant party, was thrown aside; one half of the Huguenots in the principal communes, hastened to rejoin the Papists, and the whole country, to use the expression of Aubigné, was full of those in whom "fear made conscience." The rest of the Protestants, finding themselves no longer in security at home, took the field under different leaders, and in general marched towards Orleans.

But a much more important accession of strength arrived nearly at the same time with La Rochefoucault. Both parties had eagerly courted the Protestant Princes of Germany, in the hope of obtaining that armed assistance, which would give them the superiority over their adversary; and the German troops under the command of the Rhinegrave had, as we have seen, done good service at the siege of Rouen, and already menaced Havre. On the part of the Prince de Condé and his companions, D'Andelot had been sent to the banks of the Rhine, to negotiate for the levy of auxiliaries; and, notwithstanding all the efforts of the French court to deter the German Princes from acceding to his views, he had completely gained the Landgrave of Hesse, who aided him strenuously. After some difficulties with the Duke of Wurtemburg and the Elector Palatine, he succeeded in raising a considerable body of men,* and also induced several of the petty sovereigns of Germany, to send messengers to such of their subjects as had taken

Aubigné. Castelnau.

service with the court of France, commanding them to retire on pain of being put to the ban.* He even seems to have acquired great power over the mind of the Duke of Wurtemberg; that Prince, as well as the Landgrave and several others, being highly irritated at the conduct of the Rhinegrave; who, not content with entering into the service of the Catholic party in France, though himself a Protestant, had persecuted the Huguenots at Bourges and other places, with all the fury of a religious opponent.† In the midst of his negotiations, D'Andelot was attacked by a severe return of quartan fever, with which he had been seized some time before, and was detained in a weak state at Strasburg for several days. He there, however, received a supply of money to pay the troops which he had raised, and, anxious to lose no time, caused himself to be carried in a litter to Bacharach, where he reviewed a body of three thousand reiters, (the name then given to the German cavalry,) and four thousand lanzknechts, with whom he began his march in the middle of October, having previously concluded an arrangement with the Duke of Lorraine, for a peaceable passage through his dominions.

Nevertheless, numerous dangers awaited him in his advance; for, on the frontiers of Champagne, were stationed the Duke of Nevers and Marshal St. André, at the head of a large force of well disciplined horse and foot, with orders to oppose his

* Castelnau, 116. † Auvigny.

progress, and, if necessary, to give him battle. Well served by his scouts, D'Andelot seems to have been made aware of all the movements of the enemy; and, turning suddenly from his direct course, he entered Burgundy just above the source of the Seine. Thence hurrying on by forced marches, he got into the rear of those who had been stationed to oppose him. The rest of his course towards Orleans was easy, and the news of his rapid approach reached Condé, unexpectedly, at the very time he was rejoicing at the arrival of La Rochefoucault.*

Thus, suddenly strengthened beyond their hopes, the Protestant princes determined immediately to march upon Paris, notwithstanding the approach of winter. D'Andelot, who was still suffering from fever, being left for the time in Orleans, Condé and the Admiral commenced their advance in the beginning of November, 1562; and, taking four small towns by the way, they reached, unopposed, the village of Arceuil, within a short distance of the capital, and there fixed their head-quarters.

The court and the principal leaders of the Roman Catholic army, had by this time returned to Paris; and the Constable and the Duke of Guise took vigorous measures for the defence of the city. The troops which had been sent to cut off D'Andelot, were recalled from Champagne; other forces were summoned from Guienne and the southern districts of France; and messengers were sent to hasten the advance of a considerable body of Spanish troops,

* Auvigny. Aubigné. La Noue.

which had been put at the disposal of the Duke of Guise, by the most Catholic King. But while Guise himself quitted the town, and took up a position in the suburbs, fortifying them with stockades and entrenchments, the Queen-mother employed her usual arms of negotiation and duplicity, to amuse the Protestant leaders, till such time as all the expected reinforcements had arrived.*

Though so often deceived, and by no means without suspicion of the real purposes of the Queen, Condé and the Admiral suffered themselves to fall into the trap. Several gallant skirmishes took place, indeed; and the cannon of the Huguenot army thundered at the gates of Paris; but no vigorous movement was made to compel the town to surrender, or to take it by assault. Many days were wasted in negotiation, during which time reinforcements continually poured in to the support of the court; and on the tenth of December, 1562, Condé, finding his force greatly lessened by desertion, whilst that of the enemy was infinitely augmented, decamped from before the walls of Paris, and began his retreat upon Normandy.

In that province he expected to find time to refresh his troops, and also to receive assistance of men and money from England.† But the army of the court, under the chief command of the Constable, followed

* Castelnau does not conceal that there was no sincerity in the overtures made by the court, and admits that they were put forward solely with a view to amuse the Huguenot leaders till the Roman Catholic party was in a condition to oppose them in arms. Castelnau, 118.

† Castelnau.

him in his retreat; and many of his partisans, disappointed at the result of the siege of Paris, abandoned him by the way, so that of nine thousand foot and four thousand horse with which he commenced his retreat from Arceuil, he had lost nearly two thousand of the infantry before the battle of Dreux.

Pausing at the town of St. Arnoul, on the way to Chartres, the Huguenot leaders received intelligence of the exact position of the army of the court; and, finding that Guise and Montmorenci had left the capital almost entirely destitute of troops, Condé proposed to the council of war, a plan worthy of his genius and his courage. He shewed that by a rapid march, they could turn the flank of the enemy, and in all probability, reach the gates of Paris before Montmorenci was aware of their movements. The undefended town might, either be forced to capitulate at once, or be taken by storm if it pretended to resist; and, in possession of the capital with all its resources, and having a multitude of their principal enemies in their power, the Protestant chiefs might give law to the rest of France, and fix their authority upon a basis, from which it would be impossible afterwards to throw it down.

The cautious prudence of Coligni, however, was opposed to the rash energy of Condé. He represented the dangers attending such an enterprise; the chance of Paris making a successful resistance, during the short space that was necessary for the

army of the court to retread its steps; the certainty, in such a case, of being hemmed in between two enemies; the risk of losing Orleans, and all the stores and ammunition which it contained. The opinion of Condé was overruled;* and, much against his inclination, he continued his march in retreat, the Admiral asserting, there was no probability that the Catholic army would seek a battle, and, if we are to believe the account of the Marquis de Castelnau, neglecting some of those precautions which his experience and foresight ought to have suggested.

In the meanwhile, it was eagerly debated in the Catholic camp, whether a general engagement should be hazarded or not; and Montmorenci and Guise despatched two messengers to the court at Vincennes, to ask the opinion of the Queen and her counsellors. Catherine was greatly embarrassed by this application, which was communicated to her as she was rising. There can be little doubt, that she had no great wish to see the houses of Montmorenci and Guise, elevate themselves too high by a brilliant victory, and still less that they should fall before the sword of Condé and the Admiral. As she was about to lead Castelnau, who brought her the intelligence, to the chamber of her son, the young Prince's nurse entered the room; and, pointing to her, Catherine exclaimed, "It is very extraordinary that three great and veteran commanders, should send for the advice of women and children

* Castelnau, 121.

upon a point of war. Ask the nurse, ask the nurse, she will tell you what to do."

The woman, who was a peasant of considerable abilities, and accustomed to speak her opinions boldly, replied without hesitation, though herself a Huguenot, "Since the Protestants will not be contented with reasonable terms, you have nothing left but to fight them." The matter was afterwards referred to the council, but from them Castelnau could draw no opinion, the whole body prudently declaring that no one could judge of the necessity or the expediency of a battle, except those who commanded in the field. On receiving this message from the court, the three leaders of the Roman Catholic army determined to risk an engagement. A movement was immediately made in order to pass the river Eure; but it would seem that some unnecessary delay took place, and that the Prince was suffered to extricate himself from the difficult ground in the neighborhood of the small town of Trion, where the narrowness of the roads, and the number of trees, would have impeded the manœuvres of his cavalry, and given great advantage to the superior infantry of the royalists. On the other hand, a great mistake was committed by the Admiral and the Prince de Condé, in allowing the Roman Catholic forces to pass the river unopposed;* and indeed, it would seem that they were perfectly ignorant of the movements of their adversaries after quitting Arnoul.

The troops of Montmorenci, however, advanced

* Castelnau.

in good order upon their flank, both armies tending towards the town of Dreux, a battle having become inevitable after the movements of the eighteenth of December. Nevertheless, although Condé still persisted in his opinion, that the generals of the court were advancing to engage them, the Admiral, for reasons which have never been discovered, continued to maintain to the last that no combat would take place; and even on the very morning of the battle, he was not in the field till several hours after the Prince de Condé had mounted his horse. His obstinacy, and the high opinion entertained of his sagacity, misled a great number of the Protestant gentlemen, who made no preparations for the approaching engagement, so that many of them were forced to fight through the whole day, with nothing but their ordinary clothes and arms, against enemies covered with complete armour.

The march having commenced across the large elevated plains, which characterize that part of the country, the Huguenot army was joined by D'Andelot from Orleans, who, it would seem, was as fully convinced that a battle was approaching, as his brother was that none would occur. He arrived, suffering severely from the fever* by which he was affected; but nevertheless he immediately mounted a horse, and proceeded to reconnoitre the enemy, whose drums were already to be heard. From the corner of a small wood he gained a full view of their position, which was in the form of a crescent, each wing being

* Aubigné.

flanked by a village occupied by the royalist troops. The main body of the army was seen through the opening between the two hamlets, in a line, fifteen hundred paces long; while the advanced guard, commanded by Marshal St. André, was at first placed somewhat behind the village on the left, with a reserve commanded by the Duke of Guise, consisting in the whole of about two thousand five hundred men; but this order was afterwards changed, and the several corps brought nearly on a line.*

The numbers of the Catholic force are variously stated. That it was inferior in cavalry to the Huguenot army is clear, and according to the account of Castelnau, who was present on the side of the court, the royalist troops amounted to not more than fourteen thousand foot, two thousand horse, and a considerable train of artillery. Aubigné, on the contrary, calculated the whole at twenty-four thousand men. He names the different companies of which it was composed, and which, had they been at their full complement, would undoubtedly have given the number he states: but in all probability, neither the companies of foot, nor the cornets of horse had been completed. The Protestant force was very inferior in strength, comprising between seven and eight thousand foot, and four thousand horse, with only five guns; while the reiters were embarrassed with baggage, and the foreign lanzknechts were not

* Such is shewn to have been the case by the account dictated by Guise himself, though he does not admit that they were attacked before their arrangements were complete.

much to be depended upon. The sight of the formidable force arrayed to oppose their progress, struck D'Andelot with considerable alarm; and proceeding in haste to the Prince de Condé, he told him what he had seen, and strongly advised him to retreat, and avoid the battle, while it was yet possible. Condé determined to follow this prudent advice, and for that purpose ordered the head of the column to turn upon Trion. But a small body of the reiters in front, having exposed themselves to the enemy, turned from the fire which was opened upon them; and the Constable immediately ordered his forces to advance, imagining that Condé was by this time in full retreat.

Finding that the battle could not be avoided, however, the Prince had made up his mind to become the attacking party, and was disposing his forces for that purpose, at the moment when Montmorenci, at the head of the main body of Catholics, advanced with great rapidity, between the two villages of Bléville and Epine,* and took up a new position in front of that which he formerly occupied. The Marshal St. André at the same time, having received orders to advance, hastened forward also by the same path which was taken by the Constable. The movement of Montmorenci, however, had been so rapid, that the greater part of the ground was occupied by his troops, when St. André arrived at the position which

* I find the name of this village written Pigne in two contemporary plans of the battle in my possession; but when I myself visited the field the place was called by the villagers Epine.

he intended to take up, and the advanced guard was left somewhat in the rear of the main body.

The serious error which had been committed, was instantly perceived by Condé, who hastened to take advantage of it. Wheeling his whole force, he presented a new face to the enemy; and outflanking the battalions of the Constable, who by this manœuvre was placed in front of the Admiral, with the advanced guard of the Huguenots, Condé himself appeared upon the flank of St. André. But, instead of paying any attention to that officer, who remained motionless, and apparently hesitating what to do, the Prince at once began the battle by an attack upon the main body of the enemy, charging furiously the Swiss infantry, which formed the bulk of Montmorenci's force. The Swiss were instantly broken by the fierceness of the onset; but, with their characteristic discipline and resolution, they speedily rallied; and, supported by the Duke de Damville, Montmorenci's son, with a considerable body of well disciplined horse, they ultimately repelled the first attack, but were again and again broken, by the repeated charges of the enemy. In this part of the field, very early in the day, the Constable lost his fourth son, the Baron de Montbrun, who fell while supporting the efforts of his brother Damville.

In the meantime, while such events were taking place on the flank of Montmorenci's division, he himself was attacked in front with the utmost fury, by the Huguenot advanced guard under Coligni.

At this period of the battle the superiority of the Protestant cavalry told considerably. Finding his troops shaken and alarmed, and the enemy penetrating into the very heart of his battalions, the Constable displayed as much fiery courage as the youngest of his companions, mingling fiercely with the enemy hand to hand; and while not the slightest assistance was offered to him, either by St. André or the Duke of Guise, he protracted the combat, till, at length, after having had two horses killed under him, he received a severe wound in the face, and was forced to surrender to a gentleman of the name of Bussy. By this time, the Swiss, though completely defeated, were making their way to the division of Marshal St. André; and Damville, finding his father taken, the infantry in retreat, and the force to which he was attached irretrievably lost, hastened to the Duke of Guise, beseeching him to advance to the rescue of the Constable. But Guise still refused to move, saying, it was not yet time;* and much to the mortification of his son, Montmorenci was left in the hands of the enemy, without one effort being made to save him.†

In the meanwhile, the Huguenot troops were preparing the way for their own defeat. The resistance offered by the Swiss, and the efforts of Damville at the head of his cavalry, had greatly scattered the Huguenot forces; and though the Admiral and

* Le Laboureur.

† Guise, in his own account of the battle, acknowledges this fact.

Condé had now joined each other, they were separated from a large body of French foot, which formed their principal infantry, and also from the reiters who had done such good services against the Swiss of the royalist army. Suddenly, Marshal St. André and the Duke of Guise began to move. The latter had, at the beginning of the battle, affected to hold no command in the army, except that of his own company of gens d'armes and a small body of Spanish troops, which had been placed under his orders. With these, however, he now advanced, and by a well conducted and determined charge upon the confused masses of Huguenot infantry, he drove them before him in flight and disarray; while St. André, leading on the advanced guard and a battalion of lanzknechts against the reiters of Condé's army, struck such terror into them by his sudden attack, that they began to fly precipitately from the field.

The consternation of Condé and the Admiral, on seeing the day thus unexpectedly turn against them was very great; and while the Prince remained to maintain the ground, Coligni hastened after the fugitives, who, having passed the small corps commanded by D'Andelot in spite of all that officer's efforts to rally them, and crossed a little valley in his rear, halted on the top of the hill till the Admiral arrived.

Before he could bring them back to the charge, however, various changes had come over the state of affairs. St. André himself had been taken, and

instantly put to death by a Protestant gentleman, whose estates he had caused to be confiscated with that greedy spirit for which he was notorious. But the Duke of Guise pursuing his advantage, had advanced against the Prince de Condé, who, though destitute of forces to resist the body that was moving to attack him, would not consent to quit the field. Damville, in the meanwhile, eager to obtain some guarantee for the speedy liberation of his father, kept his eyes fixed upon the Prince, and as soon as the order was given to charge, directed his whole efforts to make him prisoner, assailed him in person, at the head of his company, and forced him to surrender.

Damville, in common with the other royalist officers, it would seem, had requested the Duke of Guise, on the death of Marshal St. André, to take the command of the army ;* though Martigues and himself were both superior in military rank,† to the Lorrainese Prince, since he had been stripped of the title of Lieutenant-General. He now shewed the best spirit of subordination, by leading Condé to Guise, and placing his prisoner at the Duke's disposal.

The battle was not yet concluded, however, for by this time Coligni had rallied the reiters ; and with them and the French horse under La Rochefoucault, he made one more great effort to retrieve the day. The most furious cavalry fight that had yet taken place now ensued ; the Admiral himself lead-

* Castelnau. † Le Laboureur.

ing the charge against Guise, with such fury, that not a hundred of the royalist cavaliers were left together. But the infantry decided the fate of the field. Martigues, in command of the arquebusiers, advanced to the support of Guise, and opened a terrible fire upon Coligni; while the Duke rallied his cavalry, and once more presented a firm face to the enemy.

Night was now coming on; the scattered forces of the court were reassembling in all parts of the plain; and finding that any further efforts could but end in his own destruction, the Admiral retreated in good order, carrying off the greater part of his cannon and baggage, and accompanied by his uncle Montmorenci as a prisoner. Guise made a show of following, but the superior cavalry of the Huguenots rendered the pursuit vain; and Coligni took up his quarters for the night at the village of Neufville, not two leagues from the field of battle. He was there joined in the morning by D'Andelot, with a considerable body of infantry; and although the ground had remained in possession of the Duke of Guise, so little did the Admiral look upon the result of the battle as a complete defeat, that he proposed to return and risk another combat, while the enemy were in the midst of their rejoicings.* He could not induce the German auxiliaries, however, to follow him to the field, and was consequently obliged to continue his retreat.

* Castelnau. The same trait of pertinacity is mentioned in the account dictated by Guise.

As usual, upon this occasion neither party would admit that the other had won the battle. The Huguenots alleged that the Duke of Guise had retired to Dreux,* and consequently had not actually maintained the field. They also pointed out, that the slaughter had been much greater amongst the Catholics than amongst themselves; only about two thousand five hundred being found missing at Neufville on the following day, while from six to eight thousand men undoubtedly remained dead upon the field.† The number of men of distinction, who had fallen, was likewise much more terrible on the part of the court. The Constable's son, Marshal St. André, La Brosse, lieutenant of the Duke of Guise, the Duke of Nevers, Marshal Annebaut, the Lord of Givri, the Count de Rochefort, Beauvais, Nangis, Des Bordes,‡ and many others were lost to the

* Aubigné. Coligni himself published an account of the battle of Dreux, which was sent round to all the principal Protestant towns.

† Catherine de Medicis herself, in a letter to the Bishop of Rennes, calculates the total loss on both parts, at from six to seven thousand. Aubigné declares that, at least, eight thousand fell; and Castelnau assures us that he heard the report of the dead made to the Duke of Guise, of the numbers found upon the field of battle, which amounted to between eight and nine thousand.

‡ It is told that Des Bordes, who was attached to the Duke of Nevers, shot that prince accidentally in the battle, while looking at one of his pistols to see that it was properly charged, and it is supposed that, in consequence of this unhappy event, that gentleman afterwards sought death and found it, upon the plain of Dreux.

Roman Catholic party. Very few leaders fell on the part of the Protestants; and on either side the commander-in-chief was taken. But although the Huguenot writers have endeavored to shew, that the combat at Dreux might be considered as a drawn battle, yet impartial posterity has decided the question differently, and attributed the victory to those who obtained the fruits of success.

The Duke of Guise displayed, in the hour of triumph, great and laudable moderation. He received the Prince de Condé with the greatest kindness and courtesy; and in the difficulty of finding accommodation in the town of Dreux, he shared his own bed with his illustrious captive, who, as may well be supposed, closed not his eyes during the whole night, though Guise slept soundly upon the downy pillow of success.

Nevertheless, the conduct of the Duke in the battle did not pass without censure. It was remarked, that he who had been able to turn the fortune of the day, and wrest the meed of victory from the hands of a triumphant enemy, after the main body of the army had been utterly routed and the commander-in-chief taken prisoner, had stood by, an unmoved spectator, till the defeat of Montmorenci was complete, and had given not the slightest assistance to him, whom it was his duty to support. It is clear, also, that by this course of proceeding, he obtained all the glory of the day, and raised his fame as a leader, at the expense of his reputation for candor and honesty. The friends of

Montmorenci did not scruple to declare, that the Constable had been shamefully abandoned, by those who were jealous of his authority and renown; nor have we seen any full justification of the Duke of Guise's conduct upon this occasion.*

Each party had captured several prisoners of rank, and each had taken a quantity of baggage, standards, and arms, which were displayed as trophies of victory. But the first news, indeed, which reached the court of France, were those of defeat, some fugitives having carried to Vincennes, the tidings of Montmorenci's disaster and the rout of the main-body. Many hours of consternation followed, before the Queen and her companions were made aware of the favorable termination of the battle;† and even then, the joy which this intelligence afforded, was sadly mingled with regret, when the number of distinguished persons who had fallen, came to be mentioned.

While the Duke of Guise proceeded to Rambouillet, (whither the court almost immediately removed,) and received commendation, honor, and reward from Catherine and her son, Coligni, sending his illustrious prisoner to Orleans, marched

* Montaigne has written an essay upon the subject; which, however, leaves the conduct of the Duke as doubtful as before; and Guise in his statement admits that he made not the slightest effort to support Montmorenci till the whole main body and part of St. André's division had been routed.

† Catherine, in her letter to the Bishop of Rennes, says four and twenty hours.

boldly through the country, attacking and taking a number of small towns, almost within sight of the royal army; and then, learning that the court had removed to Chartres with the intention of laying siege to Orleans, he visited the latter city, and took every precaution for its defence; after which he retired into Normandy, in order to re-open his communication with England. By the way, he made himself master of several important places, the principal of which was Caen. The re-capture of that town from the hands of the royalists, was of greater importance from the money which it contained, than from its military strength, as the reiters in the pay of the Huguenot party were beginning to murmur for their arrears.

In the course of a few weeks, Coligni, with the forces now at his command, made himself master of Bayeux, St. Lo, Avranches, Vire, Honfleur, and other places; and then, retreading his steps, as if with the intention of drawing nearer to Orleans, he took Falaise, Berné, Argentan, L'Aigle, Mortagne, and La Charité. But while he had been engaged in these proceedings, most important events had taken place on the banks of the Loire, which brought hostilities to a much more speedy conclusion, than the gain of a battle or the capture of a city.

Advancing at the head of considerable forces, the Duke of Guise commenced the siege of Orleans, in the beginning of February. Many difficulties op-

posed themselves to the first movements of the royal army; and one of the suburbs, which was attacked and taken, cost the Duke some of his best troops. D'Andelot, though still suffering from fever, exerted himself vigorously and effectually for the defence of the place; and the royal forces had to pay dear for every advantage they attained. The weakest side of Orleans, seemed to the Duke of Guise and his companions to be the water front of the city; and there, it was determined to make a great effort, by bringing down boats filled with troops, and dislodging the Huguenots, from the small islands, which they occupied. The preparation of these boats, however, required time; and, while Guise kept up a fierce cannonade upon the walls, determined to take the fox's hole, as he called it, Catherine de Medicis, jealous of the extraordinary power he had acquired since the defeat and capture of the Constable, was not only listening to overtures for peace, but was employing the charms of her licentious maids of honor (a means not at all uncommon with that sagacious but unscrupulous Queen,) to seduce the Prince de Condé from the party he had espoused.

The knowledge that such secret negotiations were going on, had no other effect upon the mind of Guise, than to incite him to more vigorous action; but the spirits and energies of the Protestants, were kept up by the successes of Coligni in Normandy, and the still more extraordinary exploits of a

gentleman named De Piles, in the south. It had been the custom of Montluc and his barbarous companions, not content with slaughtering the Huguenots in the field, or putting them to death one by one in cold blood, to gather a number of prisoners together in various towns and fortresses, for the purpose of giving the Catholic population, from time to time, the spectacle of a grand execution. These brutal acts on the part of the persecutors of his religion, filled with indignation the breast of De Piles, then a mere boy, fresh from school,* and putting himself at the head of thirty of his companions, he entered the town of Bergerac in the middle of the day, attacked the garrison in the streets, killed and made prisoners a great number of the enemy, and opening the gates of the prisons, delivered his fellow Protestants from the fate for which they had been reserved. Hurrying thence to Sainte Foi, he met with the same success, leaving eighty of the Catholics dead in the town ; and his forces, increasing by the prisoners whom he liberated, he was enabled to take both the city and citadel of Mucidan by escalade. He then gained a still more important advantage over the governor of Perigueux, who was marching to attack him, and subsequently forced his way once more into Bergerac; where, after a desperate resistance, he made himself master likewise of the castle, and, I regret to add, displayed a degree of ferocity little less

* Aubigné.

brutal than that of Montluc himself. It must always be remembered, however, in considering the cruelties committed by both parties in these wars, that aggression and persecution were upon the part of the Roman Catholics, and that the sanguinary acts of the Protestants, though deeply to be lamented, were committed in retaliation for still more terrible evils already endured.

Although the successes of this young and daring leader, had no very great effect on the military position of the contending parties in Guienne, they served to restore confidence to the Huguenots, both in the districts where they were achieved, and in the besieged city of Orleans. But the deliverance of that place, and the temporary restoration of tranquillity, were destined to be accomplished by a private hand and a great and detestable crime.

The negotiations, which Catherine de Medicis had commenced with the Huguenot party, were proceeding slowly, and the operations against the town of Orleans were considerably advanced, when a rumor was suddenly spread through the Roman Catholic army, that the Duke of Guise had been wounded by one of his attendants.* This report, though it was, as usual with the first tidings of great events, inaccurate in some particulars, was nevertheless true regarding the principal fact, and consternation spread through the forces occupied in the siege.

* Letter of the Spanish ambassador. Memoires de Condé, vol. ii. p. 132.

The person who inflicted the wound could scarcely be called an attendant of the Duke; but it would seem, that some time before, he had applied to be taken into the service of that Prince, and had been received by him into the royal army, though in what capacity does not clearly appear. His name was John Poltrot, lord of the small fief of Mairé, or Mêré, near Aubeterre: he was bankrupt in fortune, adventurous in disposition, and wild and braggart in his demeanor and language. Educated by the Spaniards, and having passed, we are told, some years in the Peninsula, he had acquired so completely the manners and the speech of Spain, that it was impossible to distinguish him from the natives of that country, to whom he bore a considerable resemblance in features and complexion.* These circumstances qualified him well for the task of a spy upon the movements of the royalist generals, and in that capacity he had been employed by the Admiral, who furnished him with a small sum to purchase a horse and other necessaries for his enterprise.† With these he had joined the Duke of Guise, after having publicly declared, in conversation with his Protestant comrades, that it was his determination to shoot that Prince upon the first occasion. No importance was attached to his words, however, as his braggart disposition was well known; and it appears, that when the deed was accomplished, it excited as much

* Aubigné. † Castelnau.

astonishment in the Huguenot camp, as in that of the Papists.

What was the cause of his enmity towards the Duke, and whether he was driven by party zeal, stimulated by religious fury, or incited by the persuasions of others and the hope of reward, to the commission of this crime; or, on the contrary, whether he was moved only by the vain desire of obtaining an unenviable distinction, through an act as bold and resolute, as it was detestable, must remain ever in doubt. But, however that may be, he pursued his purpose with a degree of coolness, determination, and courage, which could not have failed to obtain honor and applause, had it been exercised for a better object. Watching his opportunity, when the Duke of Guise had gone out with Philip Strozzi and Monsieur de Rostaing, one of the king's officers, to reconnoitre the besieged place, previous to the grand attack which he meditated, Poltrot waited patiently on horseback behind a hedge, till his victim returned. Guise was accompanied by few attendants, Strozzi having gone on before; and the assassin shot him with a pistol loaded with three balls, the moment he had passed his place of concealment. The bullets struck the unfortunate Prince on the right shoulder, a little above the arm-pit; and one, if not more, passed out in front without entering the chest or breaking any bone. He immediately fell from his horse, and was raised by de Rostaing and his servants.

While the assassin was permitted to ride away

unpursued, the Duke was carried into the nearest house, and surgeons were sent for, who, on examining the wound, rashly pronounced that no danger was to be apprehended. But a suspicion having arisen that the balls might be poisoned, Guise, according to the foolish superstition of the day, caused charms to be employed to counteract the venom.* The expectations of his recovery, however, speedily diminished; and the surgeons had recourse to various operations, which probably, in the lamentable state of medical knowledge at that time, only served to aggravate his sufferings. Nevertheless, hopes were entertained to the last; but, six days after he received the wound, the Duke terminated his career, on the twenty-fourth of February, 1563, in violent convulsions.† We are assured, by a Protestant writer,‡ that on his death-bed, the Duke expressed extreme regret for the massacre of Vassi; and with his last breath besought the Queen to conclude a peace, as soon as possible, with the Huguenots; pronouncing those who should turn her from such a course to be the real enemies of France.

Thus died, in the prime of life, Francis of Lorraine, Duke of Guise, beyond all doubt one of the greatest men of his age. At once dignified and affable, courteous though proud, liberal though grasping, generous though ostentatious; though occasionally cruel, not generally severe; though unbounded in ambition, not without indications of a

* Letter of the Spanish ambassador before cited.

† Castelnau. Aubigné. ‡ Aubigné.

patriotic spirit and noble self-devotion. To his friends and supporters, his bounties knew no limit. To his rivals his conduct was less magnanimous, so long as they retained any power to injure him. Appreciating great qualities, even when they were different from those which he himself possessed, he admired the high genius and fiery ardor of the Prince de Condé; but esteemed less, perhaps, than they merited, the calmer and more calculating skill of the Admiral de Coligni, and the rude and domineering, though powerful, mind of the Constable de Montmorenci. His conduct towards the latter, at the battle of Dreux, as well as the severities which he exercised upon those who had been entrapped into his hands at Amboise, have left his character upon the page of history, stained with the charge of faithlessness and treachery, which even his generous treatment of the Prince de Condé, and the chivalrous courtesy which he displayed on many other occasions, have not been able to efface. Nevertheless, the higher points of his character so far predominated over the baser, that, while he was loved and mourned with intense affection and profound grief by his friends and companions, he was admired and even regretted by his political enemies, and his rivals in the career of ambition. "Thus died," says the celebrated Protestant historian of those days, "this great captain, excellent as a soldier in all points, but above all, in the reconnoitring of fortresses; whose genius would have tended, not to the ruin, but to

the aggrandizement of France, in another season, and under another reign."*

Numerous other epitaphs, laudatory and condemnatory, commemorated the virtues and the faults of this commander; but few, excepting a brief Latin poem, attributed to the pen of the famous Chancellor de L'Hospital, did justice alike to the good and bad qualities of the dead. Perhaps it may be said, that both were carried to an extraordinary height in the Duke of Guise, and the circumstances in which he was placed called them equally into operation.

The fate of his assassin was that which usually overtakes the murderer. With every opportunity of escape,—mounted on a powerful horse, unpursued during several hours, and but a short distance from a large body of Huguenot forces,—he wandered about till the following morning, when, brought back, as if by some irresistible power, to the scene of his crime, he was accidentally found, sleeping in a barn very near the spot where he had fired upon the Duke. He was arrested immediately upon suspicion,† and without the slightest hesitation confessed the deed. He also at first declared, not only that he had been

* I have ventured to change the last word of this quotation, in order to restore what I believe the real sense of the author: for the word, "*frere*, brother," for which I have substituted, reign, is evidently a misprint; Guise, having only served under one brother of Charles IX. during whose reign he could not be said to have done any thing for the aggrandizement of France.

† Castelnau. Aubigné. Memoires de Condé.

instigated to assassinate Guise, by the Admiral and Theodore Beza, but that there were a number of other persons spread over the country, and bound by oath, to put the principal leaders of the Roman Catholic party to death.* Little credit was attached to this tale even at the time, especially as the reward which he asserted that Coligni had given him, was a very inadequate inducement for the commission of so criminal and hazardous an act. All that he even pretended to have received, was two hundred crowns; and, although the Admiral at once admitted that he had paid him that sum, to act as spy in the royal camp, both that great leader and Beza, indignantly denied that they had done anything to persuade him to commit the crime which he had perpetrated; adding, that they were sure, the accusation had been wrung from him, either by torture or by promise of pardon. Such, however, was not the fact; and when subsequently a cruel and horrible death was presented to him, after having undergone all that a barbarous age could inflict,† he retracted the charge, exculpated every one but himself; and acknowledging, that if the deed were still to be done, he would perform it, he was torn to pieces by four horses, with this singular avowal on his lips.

Some demonstrations were made of a design to continue the siege of Orleans; but the death of the

* Letter of the Spanish ambassador.

† The word used by Aubigné is Tenaillé, which gives a horrible idea of the torture to which he was subjected.

Duke of Guise, together with the successes of the Admiral in Normandy, and his rapid approach towards the royal camp, spread such consternation amongst the counsellors of the Queen, that she hastened the negotiations for peace, which had been commenced. The Constable and the Prince de Condé, having taken part therein, their natural desire to recover their freedom, as well as the anxiety of the Princess de Condé to withdraw her husband from a state of imprisonment, not less detrimental to her domestic happiness, than to his own honor and comfort, facilitated the measures of Catherine, and brought about a treaty of peace, which promised but few advantages to the Protestants, and no very stable tranquillity to the realm. A general amnesty, with liberty of conscience, were the principal features of the treaty. Certain towns were named in various parts of France, in which the Protestants might exercise the ceremonies of their religion openly; no persecution whatsoever was to take place in regard to points of faith; all persons were to be restored to their property, honors, and offices; all prisoners were to be liberated on both parts, and all foreign troops were immediately to be paid and sent out of the country. A concluding article provided, that the treaty was to be verified by the various Parliaments of France; but at the very moment of its signature, the most clear-sighted persons of the realm, perceived that on this point much opposition would arise; and we find by one

of the letters of the Spanish ambassador, that while Catherine de Medicis was bestowing all sorts of caresses on the Huguenot leaders, she insinuated to the friends of her most Catholic ally, that she only yielded to circumstances, and, to use her own expression, "Drew back, but to take her spring the better." The terms which were granted, gave but little satisfaction to either party; and Coligni did not hesitate to declare, though he ultimately accepted the conditions agreed upon, that the interests of the Protestants had been sacrificed for the liberation of the Prince de Condé. Doubts and animosities of every kind remained unextinguished; each faction was divided in itself, as well as irritated against the other; no one entertained the least expectation that the articles of the treaty would be sincerely executed; and each hesitated to perform the part which it had undertaken, lest it should give an advantage to a treacherous opponent: and thus in gloom and discontent on all sides, commenced a temporary cessation of hostilities, during which the young King of Navarre first emerged from the retirement of the college, to take a part in the gay and licentious scenes which covered over, like glittering dross, the volcano that lay beneath the feet of the French people.

BOOK III.

THAT article of the treaty of peace, to the accomplishment of which Catherine de Medicis looked forward with the greatest satisfaction, was the expulsion of all foreign troops from the land, and to the same object tended the wishes and hopes of all the best men in her son's dominions. The state of the country, from the ravages of the reiters, and the internal dissensions of the people themselves, had become the most lamentable that it is possible to conceive; and as it has been eloquently depicted by a contemporary author, who took a part in all that he relates, I will, according to my usual custom, give his own words, that the reader may learn, from the impressions of an eye-witness, the fearful condition to which a short period of civil dissension had reduced a flourishing and abundant land.

"After the publication of the edict of peace," says Monsieur de Castelnau, "which took place on the seventh day of March, 1562, (1563),*

* Castelnau apparently commenced the year at Easter; but it is to be remarked, that the edict is dated the nineteenth of March.

although it greatly displeased many Catholics, to behold such a change in the Roman religion authorized by an ordinance of the King, nevertheless they were compelled to accommodate themselves to the terms, and yield to fate, which not being subject to human laws, had reduced the affairs of France to this state; seeing that one year of civil war had brought about such misfortunes and calamities, that it was scarcely possible, that by its continuation the country could ever recover. For agriculture, which is the most necessary thing to maintain the body of a state, and which was formerly better exercised in France than in any other kingdom, as the most fertile garden in the world, was now entirely abandoned therein; an incalculable number of towns and villages sacked, pillaged, and burnt, were becoming deserts, and the poor labourers driven from their houses, spoiled of their goods and their cattle, robbed, and put to ransom, to-day by the one, to-morrow by the other, of whatever religion or faction they might be, fled like wild beasts, abandoning all that they had, not to remain at the mercy of those who were without pity.

"And as to the traffic which is very great in this kingdom, it was also given up, as well as the mechanical arts; for the tradesmen and artizans quitted their shops and their employments to put on the cuirass. The nobility was divided, the church oppressed, no one being certain of his property or his life; and as to justice which is the foundation of

kingdoms and of republics, and of all human society, it could not be administered, seeing that where every thing is a matter of force and violence, one can no longer exercise the office of the magistrate, nor administer the laws. In a word, the civil war was an inexhaustible source of all wickedness, of thieving, robbery, murder, incest, adultery, parricide, and every other enormous vice that can be imagined, for which there was neither any check nor any punishment; and the worst of all was, that in this war, the arms which had been taken for the defence of religion, annihilated all religion and piety, and produced a body, rotten and wasted with the burning pestilence of an infinity of atheists. The churches were sacked and demolished, the ancient monasteries destroyed, the monks driven forth, the nuns violated, and that which had taken four hundred years to build was destroyed in a day, without exempting even the sepulchres of our kings, and of our fathers."

There can be but little doubt, that all the evils here depicted, were severely aggravated by the large bodies of foreign troops engaged on both sides, who were without any moral tie or restraint, in the midst of a country given up to anarchy, and indulged their habits of pillage without remorse, amongst a people who set them the example, by mutually destroying and plundering each other. Great difficulties, however, opposed themselves to the discharge of the reiters, as the finances of both parties were

exhausted, and considerable arrears had become due. But the means were at length found, and the principal part of the foreign troops were sent out of the kingdom.

Havre de Grace still remained in the hands of the English, and it was now the desire of all parties in France that they should be expelled from that strong position. Nor can we altogether exculpate some of the leaders of the Huguenot faction from the charge of deserting the ally who had rendered them such good service in time of need; for we find that the Prince de Condé rivalled the Duke of Montpensier in the siege of Havre, which was commenced as soon as possible after the signature of the treaty.

In a letter from Cecil to Sir Thomas Smith, dated the seventeenth of November, 1562, it is stated that the Queen of England had solemnly engaged her word to the Prince, not to make peace without him; and on the twenty-first of March, in the following year, Cecil remarks, with some bitterness, "The negotiations are going on at Orleans, without any consideration for the Queen of England: If it be so," he adds, "I know the worst, which is, by stout and stiff dealing to make our own bargain; and so is the Queen's Majesty fully bent and intended."

A great part of the Huguenot army was also engaged by Catherine de Medicis in the operations against Havre; but that place was vigorously de-

fended by the Earl of Warwick, although the plague was raging in the town, so that the number of his efficient soldiers was greatly reduced. Succor, however, was daily expected from England; and it is probable that Havre would have been preserved for some time, had not the want of fresh water become intolerable, the supply having been cut off by the besieging army. Another circumstance likewise tended to hasten the surrender. The secretary of Sir Thomas Smith, the English ambassador, charged with letters from his master to the Earl of Warwick, was taken, while endeavoring to effect his entrance into the town, and his despatches having been decyphered, were found to contain the information, that a large fleet and army might be daily looked for, to effect the deliverance of the place. Other letters were immediately forged in the cypher used by Smith, warning the Earl that no assistance was to be expected from England; and the Earl, deprived by this false intelligence of all hope of relief, seeing the enemy in possession of most of the outworks, his troops so enfeebled by pestilence, that the dead were left unburied where they expired, and nothing but brackish water to be obtained in the town, during the height of an intensely hot summer, determined to capitulate, if he could do so upon favorable terms. Those which were granted, may be considered highly honorable to himself and to his country. The prisoners on both sides were to be exchanged, the garrison was to be permitted to

march out with its arms and baggage, six days were to be allowed for effecting its retreat; whatever vessels might be necessary for conveying the English troops to their native shore, were to enter the port without impediment; and, although the citadel was placed in the hands of the besiegers, as a security for the surrender of the town, the French standard was not to be displayed till the place was evacuated.

The capitulation was signed on the twenty-eighth of July, and two days after, the Earl of Clinton, with a fleet of sixty sail, appeared before Havre, and received the garrison which he had come to support.* But more than three thousand of the Earl of Warwick's soldiers had fallen victims to the plague; and we find from a letter of the Bishop of London, dated in August, 1563, that the court of England was well satisfied, that the Earl should retire on such favorable terms.

Various negotiations between France and England succeeded; and much heat was shewn on both parts;

* Although the sick were left behind, (see Memoires de Castelnau, lib. v. chap. iii.) the soldiers carried with them the plague into England, and the vast utility of quarantine laws was never more strongly shewn than in this instance. The troops embarked on the thirtieth of July; the first case of plague took place in London immediately after, having previously appeared in a seaport of Kent. Twenty thousand one hundred and thirty-six persons perished in the capital alone. Trade and business of all kinds nearly ceased, and infinitely greater evils were inflicted in a few months upon commerce, without reckoning human sufferings than ever took place from the regulations of the quarantine during centuries.

but in the end, a treaty of peace was concluded by the intervention of Monsieur de Castelnau and Sir Thomas Smith. Some difficulties were made by Elizabeth, in regard to the ratification, but she at length gave her consent; and the faint and untenable claims of England upon Calais, were finally abandoned upon the payment of a hundred and twenty thousand crowns.

Several events of minor importance had taken place in the meantime, into the particulars of which it is not necessary here to enter. The majority of the King, at the commencement of his fourteenth year, had been declared in the Parliament of Rouen; the Queen-mother had suffered a dangerous injury by a fall from her horse, from which, however, she recovered with extraordinary rapidity, although her life was at one time despaired of. Fêtes and amusements had succeeded at Fontainebleau, in the midst of which, the Prince de Condé seemed to have totally abandoned the cause for which he had raised the standard of revolt; and, in the arms of the licentious ladies of Catherine's court, to have forgotten his devoted wife, his religious duties, his real friends, and his political position. The Papists of France, and various neighboring princes of the same creed, had strongly urged the Queen-mother and the young King, to set at nought the obligations by which they had so lately bound themselves; and numerous infractions of the treaty, had been committed by the bigoted Roman Catholics of the southern provinces.

One event, however, must be marked more particularly, as the first indication of that mortal enmity conceived by the house of Guise against the Admiral de Coligni, which ended only with the massacre of Saint Bartholomew's day. The accusation brought by Poltrot against that celebrated commander, notwithstanding its formal retraction by him who had made it, still rankled in the minds of the wife and children of the great Prince, who had fallen before Orleans; and shortly after the capitulation of Havre, Ann of Este, duchess of Guise, with her children and brothers-in-law, made a formal demand of justice against the Admiral, accusing him in direct terms, of instigating the murder of the Duke. Catherine de Medicis endeavored, as far as possible, to smooth these angry feelings, and sought to prevail upon the Duchess, by the hope of a more fitting opportunity for revenge, to abandon her object at this time. But the rancor of the Princes of Lorraine remained unabated; and the Admiral, while he declared that he was able and ready to clear himself of the charge, was obliged to surround his person by large bodies of Huguenot retainers, to guard against the private attempts with which his life was menaced.

At the same time, from every part of France, were heard murmurs in regard to various violations of the edict; and it was apparent, that some steps must be taken, to stay the rash proceedings of the more bigoted Roman Catholics, in order to prevent the civil war from being immediately renewed. Under

these circumstances, Catherine de Medicis determined upon making a pompous progress into different parts of the kingdom, accompanied by the young King and the greater part of the court, which project was executed in the year 1564.

In this expedition, Catherine was followed by the young King of Navarre, for whom, during his youth, she seems to have entertained a great and extraordinary affection, taking a pleasure, even at this early period, in watching the development of his mind, and initiating him into affairs of state, as if she foresaw the high destiny which ultimately awaited him.* In all her pastimes and amusements he was invited to bear a part; and to the council table itself, even when in secret deliberation, he was permitted to accompany her.† Policy, indeed, might have some share in the caresses which Catherine bestowed upon the young King, and her object might be as much to reconcile him to the sort of captivity in which she held him, as to gain his affection for herself and for her children. Whatever might be the motives of her conduct, it is certain that, from the earliest age, she taught him to taste of all the pleasures of the court, and instilled into him, in his youth, licentious views in regard to various points of morality, which produced, at an after period, those acts, that form the chief stain upon his private and public history.

Joy, gaiety, and pageantry, accompanied the court

* Memoires de Nevers.

† Memoire du President de Calignon.

of Catherine upon her journey through the realm; and although the menacing aspect of some of the Protestants and some of the Catholics, and the recollection of the force which had been used towards herself and her children by the Triumvirate, had induced her to augment the numbers of the Swiss guard, and to add thereunto a French guard of five hundred men, but little military display attended her progress. Gay gentlemen and beautiful women were her principal escort; and it seemed as if she had suddenly taken the determination, after having failed in suppressing the troubles of the kingdom by force of arms, to conquer them by pleasure, levity, and licentiousness. In so doing, she shewed her knowledge of the French character, more than her knowledge of human nature; as she had yet apparently to learn, as well as to teach, that the fiercest crimes, and the most vehement turbulence, are nourished and envenomed by luxury and depravity.

The court first directed its steps to the side of Lorraine; and, mingling the arts of policy with the amusements of the day, the Queen, while at Bar le Duc, carried on negotiations with the principal German Princes on the frontier, with a view of engaging them to refrain from giving any farther assistance, to the rebellious subjects of France. In this attempt she was unsuccessful; but pursuing the same plan in the course of her progress, through Burgundy, Dauphiny, and Languedoc, she

held long and secret interviews with the Duke of Savoy, with the Vice-legate, and with a private agent of the Pope, who was sent to confer with her at Avignon. In the meanwhile, from time to time, the court, while refusing openly to listen to the views of the more violent Catholics, and the suggestions of the bigoted King of Spain, gave the Protestants, by its acts, good cause to suspect, that one object of the Queen-mother was, slowly and invidiously, to take from them the privileges which had been granted by the treaty of pacification, and to deprive them of the means of future resistance.* Edict after edict, while pretending to interpret the treaty, confined the concessions to the Huguenots within narrower bounds; the fortifications of various towns and castles, which had afforded refuge and protection to the Protestants, were demolished, and a strong citadel was built in Lyons, to overawe a city which had shewn itself so favorable to the opponents of Romish corruption.

But such mild means did not accord with the more vehement spirit of the Romish Church; and a number of causes, some of evident magnitude, and others apparently trifling, combined at this time, to lay the foundations of that horrible league, which produced such infinite calamities in France. There can be little doubt that, the original scheme for a general confederacy between the Roman Catholic princes of Europe, and the French papistical leaders, was

* This intention is admitted by Castelnau, lib. v. chap. x.

devised at Trent, where the council was still sitting, when Catherine began her progress through her son's kingdom. To the great and disastrous assembly in that city, the Cardinal of Lorraine had been despatched on the part of the court of France; and he had vigorously opposed, during the earlier meetings, the pretensions of the Roman See, to a domination totally subversive of the privileges of the Gallican Church. But the news of his brother's death, by the hands of an assassin, inflamed his animosity against the Protestants, to such a degree, as to induce him to pass over all other considerations for the sake of vengeance. Nor was the conduct of the Huguenots, it must be confessed, such as could tend to mitigate the indignation of the house of Guise, or to remove the suspicion that they had instigated the assassin to commit the act. Coligni, La Rochefoucault, and others, boldly denied all participation in the crime before its perpetration; and history has done them justice on this point. But doubts still hovered over the head of Theodore Beza, at a period when much of the heat of passion was abated;* and we know that the great body of the Reformed Church, had the folly and the wickedness to adopt the deed after its commission, by the commendations which many of its leading members bestowed upon Poltrot. His name and his actions were celebrated by the pens of their most eloquent writers; his fate was deplored in epitaphs, songs,

* Le Laboureur.

and canticles;* his crime was justified by a comparison with those personages mentioned in the Old Testament, who devoted themselves to the destruction of the persecutors of Israel, and the spirit of Christianity was totally forgotten, in rejoicings over the death of a great and implacable enemy. This conduct, equally unworthy and impolitic, not only incensed their enemies in France even more than the act itself, but gave the force of probability to all the darkest accusations against them; and the Cardinal of Lorraine, fully persuaded that the assassination of his brother had been instigated by the leaders of the Protestant party, yielded even the rights and interests of the Church of France, in his eagerness to return and crush those, who were not only religious opponents but private enemies.

In Pius IV., and his representatives at Trent, he found zealous co-operators; and had the King of Spain been even less willing than he was, to take part in any act of furious bigotry, his political position, with regard to the Low Countries, would have afforded sufficient motives, for joining in any scheme, which tended at once to embarrass France with intestine dissensions, to engage the Protstant forces of Germany in the civil war of the neigh-

* A curious collection of these pieces is given by Le Laboureur, shewing the most deplorable perversion of genius and learning, and how the corrupt heart of man can misapply great examples and holy doctrines, to the justification of the darkest and most fearful crimes.

boring country, and to deprive the Reformers of his northern dominions of all hope of assistance and support.*

It is clear that Catherine de Medicis herself, proposed, during the last sittings of the Council of Trent, an interview between the Pope and the Roman Catholic sovereigns of Europe; and we find by her letters to the Bishop of Rennes, that the Papal nuncio in France, was despatched, first to Vienna, and then to Rome, in order to arrange this important conference. Rumor at once attributed to her, the intention of forming a general league for the suppression of the Protestant religion; and great fears were entertained in Germany that tumult and civil war would be the immediate consequences. It is probable, however,—as in her secret correspondence she denies all such intention —that the scheme of this confederacy had already been discussed at Trent, and that some private, but vague, intelligence of such proceedings being in agitation, had reached the Protestant princes.

The design, with whomsoever it originated, was eagerly adopted by the Cardinal of Lorraine; and he pursued it with a degree of vigor, which soon united in its favor the most influential Papists throughout Europe. Thus supported, he returned to France, in the beginning of the year 1564, and it would seem, that the first foundations of the League in that country, were laid at Nancy, during the progress of the

* Castelnau.

court.* The Cardinal, however, had the mortification of seeing the decrees of the council of Trent, rejected generally by the French church, severely censured by the more reasonable Roman Catholics, and scoffed at, with every expression of contempt and derision, by the Huguenots.

After conferences in the south-east of France with the Papal nuncio, and the Duke of Savoy, the court turned its steps towards the west, in order, as it appeared, to give the Queen-mother an opportunity of once more embracing her daughter, the young Queen of Spain. It was not, indeed, without considerable difficulty, that the cold-hearted Philip suffered his young wife to advance as far as Bayonne,† to meet her family, while he himself remained at Madrid; but the progress of Protestant principles in the Low Countries, and the desire of forming such a party in France, as would give occupation to the more turbulent subjects of the neighboring power, and prevent them from aiding the people whom his tyranny was driving into revolt, had probably a greater share in wringing from him his consent, than the wishes of his Queen, or the solicitations of Catherine. The Princess herself was sent to the interview, with a numerous and splendid escort; and she was accompanied by the famous Ferdinand of Toledo, Duke of Alva, instructed to carry on the negotiations for the league, which both

* Castelnau.

† Le Laboureur. Letter of the French ambassador at Madrid to the Bishop of Rennes.

parties had in view, and to give that impulse to the mind of the Queen-mother of France, which the policy of Philip required.

Pomp and pageantry, sport and amusement, appeared to occupy the two courts, and covered from the eyes of the world, the darker and more sanguinary councils, which were held in the apartments of the Queen-mother; and the steps which were taken by the court of France, to induce Pius IV. to recall the bull of excommunication and deprivation, which he had imprudently fulminated against the Queen of Navarre, might well tend to create a belief, that Catherine and her counsellors entertained no sinister designs against the Protestants of France.

The nature and the tendency of the conferences, between the Queen-mother and the Duke of Alva, however, were discovered by one whom they thought too young, too light, and too fond of pleasure, to apply his mind to the high subjects of which they treated. The Prince of Navarre was permitted to be present at several of the interviews, in which the fate of many of his family was discussed; and although the purposes of the Queen and the Duke, were concealed under figurative language, he was too keen to be deceived, and too strongly attached to his mother, to refrain from communicating to her the designs entertained against her and others. There is much reason to believe, that a plan for cutting off the Protestants of France at a single blow, was agitated by Catherine and the Duke, and that the Queen-mother expressed some desire

to save the higher personages, who had embraced the Reformed religion. It is clear that some such suggestion must have been made by Catherine, to draw from Alva the famous reply, that "The head of a salmon was worth a hundred frogs." Those words were overheard, however, and remarked by the young Prince of Navarre; and, after meditating over their import, for some time, he caused them to be communicated to his mother, by the President de Calignon, shewing a degree of wisdom and caution, in his choice of the messenger, which was scarcely to be expected at so early an age.*

It is proved, indeed, by contemporary letters, that he already displayed many of those extraordinary qualities, which afterwards so greatly endeared him to the hearts of the French people. We learn from one who was probably present, that his demeanor at the court, attracted the attention of the Spanish courtiers, and that, on first seeing him, the Duke of Medina exclaimed, "Mi parece este Principe, o es Emperador o lo ha deser.—It appears to me, that this Prince is either an Emperor, or deserves to be one."† In the affections of his cousin, the young Queen of Spain, he soon made such progress, that a degree of regard was established between them,

* Memoire du President de Calignon. Anquetil, who sadly disfigures a great part of the history of these times, gives a somewhat bombastic version of Alva's speech, making him say "ten thousand frogs," but as Calignon has furnished the particulars himself, I have adhered to his statement.

† Chronologie Nobenaire, tom. i.

which, at an after period, produced the most beneficial results, and proved the salvation of himself and his mother. But, though mild and affable in his manners, and apparently light-hearted, the young King of Navarre maintained his own dignity, we are assured, whenever the occasion required it; took his place according to his rank in the state, and suffered no one to treat him without due respect.

After passing some time at Bayonne, in festivities, negotiations, and sports, the two courts of France and Spain separated and Catherine de Medicis took her way towards Nerac, the ordinary residence of the Queen of Navarre; but, although the young King and his mother, displayed nothing but smiles and favor towards Jeanne d'Albret, that acute Princess, already informed of the secret conferences of the Queen-mother with the Duke of Alva, placed little reliance upon the professions of regard, with which she was loaded, and prepared to withdraw her son, at the first favorable opportunity, from the court of France. During the stay of the court at Nerac, the Queen of Navarre was persuaded to suffer, within her territories, the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion, in which, for several years, the Papists had been denied that entire liberty of conscience, which the Protestants themselves, so eagerly demanded in other parts of France. It is probable, that she made this concession with regret; but the dangerous position in which she was placed, did not permit her to hesitate,

although she firmly resisted every inducement which was held out, to lead her back into the bosom of the Roman Catholic church.

It must not be forgotten, in judging of the difficulties which surrounded Jeanne d'Albret, that the kings of Spain had always looked with a greedy eye, upon the small mountain principality, which was all that remained in her possession of the dominions of her ancestors; and that the Pope, by declaring her incapable of reigning, had afforded a pretext to the neighboring sovereign, for stripping her of her territories. Her only hope of security, rested in the protection afforded her, by the court of France, the policy of which was of course strongly opposed to the views of the King of Spain. But on that side, also, she had to apprehend, that in case of any unreasonable resistance to the will of her royal relatives, the French monarch himself might take advantage of the Papal censure, to seize upon her possessions, and to deprive her and her son for ever of their independent sovereignty.

Nor were the enemies of her house so few, or so powerless, at the court of France itself, as not to place her in a condition of great danger; and a conspiracy of the most odious kind was discovered, shortly after the visit of Catherine de Medicis to Nerac, which threatened her liberty, if not her life.*

* Monsieur d'Anquetil, upon whose perversions of French history I have before remarked, places this conspiracy previous to the journey of Catherine de Medicis to Bayonne, and assigns it as one of the causes of the great interest taken in the young

The particulars of this plot will be detailed hereafter, in speaking of the events of the year 1567. Although some authors have placed it at an earlier date, the facts themselves, as well as the statement of a contemporary writer, the best authority we have on the subject, prove, that the design of Philip to carry off the Queen of Navarre and her son from Bearn, could not have been entertained before the young Prince returned to his mother's dominions.

From Nerac, the court of France returned by slow journeys towards Paris; fêtes and rejoicings took place, wherever it paused; and nothing obscured the pleasures of the expedition from its commencement to its close, but the plague which appeared in various cities through which it passed, the severity of the winter which kept it shut up in Carcassone for several weeks, and the consequences

King of Navarre, by those to whom he was introduced during the royal progress. Anquetil seems to have been ignorant of the Memoir of the President de Calignon, who distinctly states, that this conspiracy took place in 1567, and attributes the fact of the Queen of Spain having intimated the existence of such a plot to Jeanne d'Albret, to the affection which she conceived for Henry during their interview at Bayonne. I need hardly point out to the English reader, how the want of chronological accuracy, observable in almost all French historians, deprives history of its fruits, by inverting the order of cause and effect, and consequently falsifying all those philosophical deductions, which may be drawn for the instruction of mankind from the acts of our predecessors and their results to society, when the march of events is accurately stated.

of the licentiousness encouraged by Catherine de Medicis herself, between the Prince de Condé and her maids of honor, which ended in one of them bearing him a child, without the prudent precaution of concealing the fact. The Queen affected a due degree of virtuous indignation; but the fault of the beautiful culprit was soon overlooked, and proved no impediment to her forming an after connexion of a more honorable kind.

In 1566, the Queen of Navarre appeared at the court of France, which was by this time re-established in its ordinary dwelling places.* The ostensible object of her visit to Paris, was to defend the rights of herself and her son, against a suit brought by the Cardinal de Bourbon her brother-in-law, who, after having renounced at the time of her marriage with Anthony of Bourbon, all title to the inheritance of Vendome, now sought to put forward new claims, in which, however, he was not successful. It is probable, that the real object of the Princess was to withdraw her son from the court of the Queen-mother, in order to educate him according to her own views. By this time his Protestant tutor La Gaucherie was dead; and the firm and resolute attachment of Jeanne d'Albret to the Reformed

* Some authors declare that Jeanne d'Albret accompanied the court from Nerac; and it appears certain that she did so part of the way towards Paris; but Victor Cayet, who was in attendance upon the young King of Navarre, implies that she remained in the south, and afterwards rejoined Catherine de Medicis.

religion, did not permit her to see with indifference, the ascendancy which Catherine de Medicis had gained over the mind of her child. The accomplishment of her purpose, indeed, was by no means easy, and she was obliged to have recourse to a stratagem which she executed with great skill. The necessity of examining the condition of the estates of the house of Vendome, afforded her an excuse for making a journey into Picardy, in which some of these lands were situated; and, accompanied by the young Prince, she proceeded to Marle, where she spent several days in regulating her affairs, and then returned to Paris, without permitting the slightest indication of her design to appear. Shortly after, she again set out for Vendome, taking her son with her; but suffering it to be understood that it was her intention, speedily to rejoin the court of France. But suddenly turning from her course, after having visited her estates in the neighborhood of Beaumont and la Flêche, she hurried on towards Bearn, taking leave of Catherine and Charles IX. by letter.

The young King of Navarre was now placed under the tuition of an old and attached friend of the house of Navarre, named Florent Chretien, a man who combined with much erudition, a strong taste for poetry, of which his royal mistress was passionately fond; and under this wise preceptor, Henry made as much progress in the study of polite literature, as the turbulence of the times permitted.

But it was not long before he was called from a peaceful residence amongst his native mountains, to mingle in the fierce scenes of civil contention, which once more overspread the land.

It is not by any means concealed by the Roman Catholic writers of the day, that a gradual but systematic infringement of the treaty of peace was pursued by Catherine de Medicis, under the instigation of the house of Lorraine. Nor can it be denied, that, irritated by persecution, the Protestants themselves committed many atrocious and impolitic acts, which, in turn, aggravated the animosity of the Papists towards them. Among these was the murder of an officer of the King's guard, named Charry, an implacable enemy of the Huguenots, who, having demeaned himself with great insolence towards D'Andelot, Colonel-general of the French infantry* and therefore his superior officer, was assassinated in the open day by Monsieur Chatellier, a gentleman attached to the house of Chatillon.† It would appear, however, that private revenge had a great share in prompting the crime, as the brother of Chatellier had fallen by the hand of Charry some time before.

Several tumults and murders also took place in the south of France, in consequence of the open violation of the edict of pacification by the Roman Catholic governors of the provinces, and it was

* Brantome. Aubigné.

† Journal de Bruslart. That author says, that Chatellier was guidon of the Admiral, otherwise, standard-be rer.

found impossible, by the more wise and prudent of either party, to prevent the rashness and intemperance of the bigots. Even Montmorenci himself, is said to have arranged a plan for a rising in the capital against the Protestants; and the Duke de Damville, his son, pursued the same course, with even greater fury and success, in Languedoc. The attempt to excite the Parisians was suppressed by Catherine de Medicis with great promptitude and vigor, at the very moment it was taking effect, and a number of those who were commencing the work of destruction, were seized in the act, and hanged from the windows of the houses.*

A plot, less criminal perhaps, but which attracted still more attention from the importance of the persons concerned, was discovered by an extraordinary accident, shortly after the return of the Queen of Navarre to her own dominions, accompanied by the Prince her son. It is evident, that great efforts were made to suppress the facts regarding this conspiracy, but they have been detailed at length, in the Memoirs of the Duke of Nevers, apparently by the President de Calignon.† Although the

* I do not scruple to admit these charges against the Roman Catholics, as Anquetil, who shews himself in general their zealous and prejudiced advocate, does not deny the truth of the assertion.

† There may be some doubt whether the words which immediately precede this narrative in the Memoires de Nevers are those of the Duke himself, or of Calignon; but both one and the other had full opportunity of knowing the truth, and whichever was the writer he gives his full authority to the statement.

house of Chatillon was the chief object of enmity to the ambitious family of Guise, yet the Queen of Navarre had rendered herself obnoxious to them by a calmer, but equally firm and decided, opposition to their views, both religious and political; and her increasing influence with the Protestants of the kingdom, the proximity of her son to the throne, and the rallying point which her dominions afforded to the enemies of the house of Lorraine, not less than her shrewdness, good sense and resolution, rendered Jeanne d'Albret a stumbling-block which they were anxious to remove from their path. The virulent denunciations pronounced by the Pope against the Queen of Navarre, gave the sanction of the highest authority in the Romish church, to any proceedings against her, however violent. The bigotry and ambition of Philip II., pointed him out as a fitting ally, in any iniquitous designs against a Protestant, and the assembly of several large bodies of his troops at Barcelona, destined to carry on his intended operations against the Mahommedans, afforded a favorable opportunity for engaging him in an enterprise, which he considered little less meritorious in the eyes of God than making war upon infidels. The Cardinal of Lorraine did not fail to take advantage of the occasion, and re-opened with Philip, some negotiations for the destruction of the house of Navarre, which we are informed had been commenced by the Duke of Guise shortly before his death. The blood-thirsty Montluc, the Viscount of Orthés, and several other noblemen were engaged in the conspiracy; and a

cunning and determined, but somewhat indiscreet agent, was found in the person of a certain Captain Dimanche, who was employed to treat secretly with the King of Spain himself, without the knowledge of his ministers. The Duke of Alva seems to have been the only Spanish nobleman in whom the conspirators placed any confidence, and the object proposed to him, and to Philip, was, to seize upon the Queen of Navarre and her family, by marching the Spanish troops quietly through the passes of the Pyrenees, and surprising the royal victims in the little capital of Bearn. Montluc and the other commanders in Guienne, engaged to favor the enterprise; and it was proposed, that Jeanne d'Albret and her children, should be led prisoners into Spain and placed at the mercy of the Inquisition.

That the Prince who could employ that horrible instrument of tyranny, for the purpose of justifying the murder of his own son, would have no hesitation in sanctioning any of its proceedings against a sovereign, part of whose dominions he unjustly retained, and whose religious principles he held in the most bigoted horror, not a doubt could be entertained; so that we may well regard the conspiracy of the house of Guise, as likely to affect the lives of the Queen of Navarre and her family. The hand of God, however, was against the conspirators. Dimanche performed his journey into Spain uninterrupted; but Philip had some short time before moved from Madrid; and, as the messenger of

the Cardinal of Lorraine was preparing to follow the court, he was taken ill with a violent attack of fever in a small and miserable Spanish inn, without attendance or assistance of any kind. In this wretched state, he forgot the secrecy with which all his proceedings were to be conducted, and inquired of the landlord if there were any of his fellow-countrymen in Madrid, who would give him help and comfort in his sickness. A servant of the young Queen, named Vespier was soon found, who came to visit him, and, moved with compassion, had him carried to his own house, where he attended him through his long sickness, with the utmost kindness and devotion.

Enfeebled by disease, and filled with gratitude towards his benefactor, Dimanche confided to Vespier, the motive of his journey to Spain, and even, it would appear, shewed him the despatches with which he was entrusted. It so happened, that Vespier was a native of the town of Nerac, and consequently born in the territory of the Queen of Navarre. Horrified at the tidings he had received, and at the danger of his sovereign, he determined immediately to communicate the intelligence to the young Queen of Spain, which he did through her Almoner, who, though a zealous Roman Catholic, was too wise and virtuous a man, not to feel shocked and indignant at the projection of such infamous acts under the veil of religion.

The unhappy Elizabeth was strongly affected by the tidings she heard; and she determined to frus-

trate the barbarous design which was entertained by her husband and the Cardinal of Lorraine. But, as tenderness and pity were equally unknown to the cold-hearted Prince with whom her fate was linked, the only method of effecting her purpose, which presented itself, was, to give information of the plot and its object to her own mother, and to the Queen of Navarre. She paused, however, to obtain confirmation of the tale which had been told her; and, by means of the French ambassador St. Sulpice, she soon discovered that the messenger of the family of Guise, now restored to health, was admitted secretly to Philip at night, by the intervention of Don Francis of Toledo. The secretary of the French ambassador was consequently despatched immediately to the court of France, with intelligence of this intrigue; but he was commanded by the Queen of Spain, to send information of her danger to Jeanne d'Albret, as soon as he entered the French territory. Measures were instantly taken by the Queen of Navarre to guard against the attempts of her enemies; and Catherine de Medicis, though she did not venture to inquire minutely into the details of the conspiracy, nor attempt to discover the names of the conspirators, employed means to prevent the plot from having its intended result.

Jeanne d'Albret complained loudly of the house of Lorraine; and it would seem, that a plan was devised for arresting Dimanche on his return to France; but the secret having been communicated

to Aubespine, the secretary of state, that minister, whom the contemporary writer does not scruple to charge with being corrupted by the gold of Spain, gave intimation of the facts to the princes of Lorraine, and the arrest of their emissary was prevented. This conspiracy, however, amongst other circumstances, tended to aggravate the animosity which existed between the two great parties in France; and the Protestants, conceiving new hopes, from a bitter feud which manifested itself between the houses of Montmorenci and Guise, looked forward to a renewal of the war, with the vain expectation of seeing their enemies divided.

While these events were taking place, and every thing promised a speedy renewal of the civil war, the young King of Navarre, or, as he was still called, Prince of Bearn, was each day making progress in his studies, strengthening his corporeal powers by robust exercise, and developing those graces of person and mind for which he was afterwards conspicuous. Several contemporary letters still exist, which give a minute description of his manners and appearance at this period; but which shew, that while his demeanor was the most captivating, and his mind and character extraordinarily developed for a boy of his years, he had not escaped some of the vices which were then so diligently cultivated in the court of France; and which remained but too apparent throughout his whole career.

As it is necessary for the true purposes of history, to record the faults and errors of great men, and to trace the progress both of evil and of good, I shall give the statements of those who were eye-witnesses of the conduct of the young Henry, as nearly as possible in their own terms.

"We have here," writes one of the magistrates of Bordeaux, in the year 1567, "the young Prince of Bearn. One cannot help acknowledging that he is a beautiful creature. At the age of thirteen he displays all the qualities of a person of eighteen or nineteen. He is agreeable, he is civil, he is obliging. Others might say, that as yet he does not himself know what he is; but for my part, who study him very often, I can assure you that he does know perfectly well. He demeans himself towards all the world with so easy a carriage, that people crowd round wherever he is; and he acts so nobly in every thing, that one sees clearly he is a great Prince. He enters into conversation as a highly polished man; he speaks always to the purpose, and when it happens that the subject is the court, it is remarked that he is very well informed, and that he never says anything which ought not to be said in the place where he is.* I shall hate the

* I have translated this last phrase word for word "*en la place ou il est*," as the precise meaning is somewhat obscure. It might refer to his station in society, to his relative situation as to the court, or to his position at the time in the town of Bordeaux.

new religion all my life, for having carried off from us so worthy a person. Without this original sin he would be the first after the King, and in a short time we would see him at the head of his armies."

Another letter, of about the same date, gives the following account of his manners and appearance at the time. "The Prince of Bearn gains new servants every day. He insinuates himself into all hearts with inconceivable skill. If he is highly honored and esteemed by the men, the ladies do not love him less; and although his hair is inclined to red,* they do not think him the less agreeable. His face is very well formed, the nose neither too large nor too small, the eyes extremely soft, his skin brown but very smooth; and the whole animated with such uncommon vivacity, that if he does not make progress with the fair it will be very extraordinary."

In a third, some of his little follies and vices appear. We have not the precise date, but the letter is written from Bordeaux, probably somewhat later than the other two. "We have the pleasantest carnival in the world," says the writer, "the Prince of Bearn has besought our ladies to mask, and give balls turn by turn. He loves play and

* This is a curious fact, for it is well known that his hair lost its red hue in after life; and, if we may trust to contemporary portraits, became dark before it turned grey.

good living. When money fails him, he has skill enough to find more, and in a manner quite new and obliging towards others. That is to say, he sends to those whom he believes his friends, a promise written and signed by himself, begging them to return him the note or the sum which it bears. You may judge whether there is any house where he is refused. People regard it as a great honor to have one of these billets from the Prince; and every one does it with joy, for there are two astrologers here, who declare, that either their art is false, or that this Prince will some day be one of the greatest kings of Europe."

Notwithstanding the propensity for pleasures and excesses which here developed itself, Henry still pursued his studies under his mother's eye, with great zeal and application, and we have the authority of the Memoires de Nevers for stating, it was the constant endeavor of Jeanne d'Albret, to impress upon her son's mind, that it was the greatest disgrace which could befall one born to command others, to be inferior to them in knowledge and judgment, and above all, to be obliged by ignorance, to rely upon any but themselves in the government of their kingdoms and the affairs of peace and war. Her selection of his instructors also did credit to her wisdom. "She chose," says the same writer, "men of letters; but men who had not been spoiled by study, of a delicate wit, of clear reasoning, of irreproachable morals, and of know-

ledge of the world, such as are fit to teach Princes to love true honor and true piety."

While, under such well chosen teachers, the young Prince of Bearn was advancing towards manhood, the struggles and intrigues of the court still continued, and the Queen-mother, with her usual art, strove to balance party against party and man against man. Her position was undoubtedly difficult and painful; for the throne of her son, or at least his authority, was assailed by two factions, equally ambitious, and equally fanatical; and he himself wanted conduct and vigor sufficient to afford her any assistance, in checking the virulence of political rivalry, and the fury of religious zeal.

The leaning of Catherine towards the Roman Catholic faith can be looked upon as only very slight. Nevertheless it is possible, that predilection for the religion of her fathers, had some share in the mistake which she seems to have committed, in giving the weight of the royal authority, to that faction which was the most dangerous as well as the most powerful. The ambition of the Prince de Condé was wild, fitful, and under the domination of his vices, and though likely to produce turbulence and revolt, was but of small consideration, when compared with the calm, persevering, determined march of the house of Guise.

But, while Catherine, by caresses and dissimulation, endeavored to gain and deceive the Protestants, she suffered the views of the family of

Lorraine to prevail in her councils, and only retarded their operation for the purpose of giving them more certain effect. In a council of notables held at Moulins in 1566, an apparent reconciliation was effected, between the Admiral de Coligni and the princes of the house of Guise, and at the same time the feud between the family of Montmorenci and the Cardinal of Lorraine, was stifled more completely, though some sparks of the fire continued to shew themselves for a considerable period. But during all these proceedings, there can be no doubt that Catherine was anxiously, though secretly, endeavoring to undermine the power which had been obtained by the Calvinists; and all the memoirs of the times, whether Catholic or Protestant, declare with one voice, that her purpose was, so to separate and enfeeble the power of the Huguenot party, as to crush it with ease at an after period. The slow progress of her policy, however, not only irritated the more bigoted of the Papist nobility, but even annoyed the young King himself; who, by nature violent, and by education brutal, endured with impatience, which could scarcely be restrained, the pretensions of the Protestants to full toleration in the exercise of their religion.

Not all the art of the Queen-mother, was sufficient to conceal from either party, the end which she proposed to herself; and each clearly perceived that, between the contending factions in the court and the violent passions which were called into action throughout the country, some event must

soon occur, to break through the unstable peace which had been established, and to hasten the renewal of hostilities before the Queen's designs had reached maturity. Each then provided against the moment of active exertion, by combination and organization; each had its rallying words, its signs, its places of meeting, its oaths of confederacy, and its common purse.

On the one hand, the Roman Catholics, by the advice, it would seem, of the famous Tavannes,* took advantage of the religious associations, called Brotherhoods, which had for some time existed amongst the Roman Catholics of France, and employed the semblance of superstitious devotion, to cover their combination for more warlike purposes. In every large town throughout France, one or more of these Brotherhoods was established, which on certain days made procession through the streets, with banners and crucifixes displayed, and the members of these fraternities were now linked together by solemn vows, to devote life and property to the defence of the religion of Rome. The highest persons of the realm associated themselves to these bodies, and the inferior brethren held themselves ready to draw the sword at the first word of their superiors.

While such was the conduct of the Papists, the Huguenots, for the purpose of guarding themselves, carried on hasty and eager negotiations with the Protestants of foreign countries, maintained regular

* Belleforests.

envoys at the courts of various German Princes, and solicited the aid of the Prince of Orange, and the Reformers of the Low Countries.

In order to complicate the affairs of the kingdom still more, and to add to the intestine divisions of the country, with a view of engaging the ever superfluous energies of France, by a struggle within her own bosom, the King of Spain ceased not to urge the most violent measures upon the council of Catherine, and distributed, with a lavish hand, the gold of Spain amongst the leading Papists, and the high officers of the crown, whose continual solicitations, there is every reason to believe, were not without effect upon the Queen, and were still more powerful with her son.

That the infringement of the treaty of peace, and the measures for crushing their opponents, began upon the side of the Papists there can be no doubt;* but, nevertheless, it must be admitted that the Protestants were far from blameless. When law and justice were scoffed at, when faith and truth were set at nought by their enemies, it was of course justifiable and reasonable in the weaker and oppressed party, to take measures for their own defence, and hold themselves in a state of constant preparation; but the Huguenots at present, as in former instances, went beyond the due limits of resistance, and promulgated doctrines equally dangerous to the state, and injurious to their own reputation.

* Pasquier's Letters.

Books were published, justifying private assassination in cases where the preaching of divine truth was opposed by those in authority; the precepts of the Saviour himself were forgotten, by those who pretended to be his purest followers; and inapplicable examples from the Old Testament, were, again and again, held up to the eyes of the bigoted and enthusiastic, as inducements to perpetrate acts condemned by Christ himself. The person of the Queen-mother even was threatened; with a view of exciting her fears; and her enmity towards the Protestants of France was confirmed by injury and insult.

Thus went on the affairs of France, with rapid strides, to a renewal of the civil war; and towards the end of the year 1566, both parties were eager to be the first to take up arms, yet anxious for a plausible pretext, before they proceeded to the open violation of their engagements.

The Protestants had lost more, we are informed by a contemporary writer,* during four years of peace, than during the preceding period of hostilities; and, unable while in repose, to compete with art joined with authority, they were desirous of again having recourse to force, in order to recover lost ground. The Papists, conscious of the advantage they had gained, seeing the suspicion of their adversaries aroused, and fearing that the preparations in progress on the side of the Protestants, might snatch from them the predominance which they had acquired, were equally disposed to renew

* Pasquier.

the struggle; while religious zeal, on both sides, added the fiercest inducement of which the human mind is susceptible.

At length the resolution of the Queen was taken, and she determined to raise foreign forces for the purpose of striking a decisive blow, not choosing to trust entirely to the resources of the Roman Catholic party in France. It was difficult, however, to accomplish this object without producing an immediate insurrection, and the first step, adopted by herself and her counsellors, was quietly to increase the household troops, by the addition of one third to each company.* This body was altogether insufficient for the object in view; but an accidental circumstance, not only afforded a plausible excuse for a more important levy, but induced the principal Protestant leaders to urge the young King and his mother to follow the very plan which the court meditated for their destruction.

Determined to suppress the Calvinistic doctrines in the Low Countries, Philip of Spain had commanded the Duke of Alva, to raise a sufficient force for that purpose and to proceed to Brussels. A thousand Spanish horse formed the nucleus of this army, which was joined in Savoy by large levies of Neapolitans and Milanese, while a considerable body of foot was collected in Franche Comté; and the line of the Duke's march was laid out along the very frontiers of France.†

The Admiral and the Prince de Condé, holding

* Aubigné. † Memoires de Castelnau.

intimate relations with the Protestant leaders in the Low Countries, and placed in a dangerous situation themselves, felt well founded alarm, at the prospect of so formidable a force approaching the French territory, and held themselves bound to do all that they could, to impede its progress, and lengthen its march towards the place of its destination. Blinded by these considerations, they were amongst the first, to advise that a body of six thousand Swiss should be raised for the defence of the kingdom, in case of need; a proposal which was eagerly caught at by the court. But the imprudence of this suggestion soon became manifest to the Protestant chiefs; and taking advantage of the rapidity with which the Duke of Alva was carrying on his levies in Piedmont, they endeavored to remedy the error they had committed, by offering to undertake the defence of the French frontiers at their own expense. Their proffered aid was treated with utter contempt, while the Swiss troops were raised without a moment's delay; a line of conduct, which, to use the words of Castelnau, shewed the Prince de Condé, the Admiral, and their party, that "the mask was raised, and that the effect of the Catholic league against the Huguenots, was no longer to be doubted."

The advance of the Swiss into France taught them that no time was to be lost, and a great council of the Protestants was held at Valerie, where much discussion took place, as to the means to be adopted for meeting the peril of the moment.* The Admiral

* Aubigne.

strongly urged his friends to abstain from any act of violence, and, trusting to their innocence, to let the shame of recommencing the civil war fall upon the court. D'Andelot, however, opposed his brother; and, by shewing him the danger which they all ran, the faithlessness of their enemies, and the evident determination of the Papists to suppress the exercise of the Protestant religion by all means, just or unjust, he brought over Coligni to his opinion. It was consequently resolved that they should take arms, and a proclamation was drawn up, justifying that step on the score of imperative necessity.*

While these measures were in consideration amongst the Huguenots, the court was passing the summer at Monceaux, a country palace in Brie, of which Catherine de Medicis was particularly fond, and where she was carrying on some extensive alterations. The principal body of the Swiss was quartered at Chateau Thierry and in the neighboring villages, about four leagues from Meaux. The preparations for the great enterprise against the Protestants, were yet far from complete, and the large train of gentlemen who usually accompanied the court, were occupied with pleasures and amusements, and armed only with their swords. Of these facts the Admiral and his companions were well aware; and the project which was undoubtedly entertained in the Catholic party of beginning the war, by seizing upon Condé and Coligni, putting the latter to death, and confining the first for life,†

* Castelnau. † Davila.

probably suggested to them the plan, of surprising the whole court during the ceremonies of a chapter of the order of St. Michael, which was to be held on the twenty-eighth of September, of throwing the Cardinal of Lorraine into prison, and giving law to the land, as soon as they were in possession of the persons of the King and his mother. A general rendezvous was appointed at Chatillon, and thither the Huguenots began to flock towards the beginning of the month.

Vague rumors reached the court, of large bodies of armed men traversing the country from different points, of movements in various towns, and of many other signs of agitation in the Protestant party, which might well serve to indicate that some important enterprise was meditated. But so great was the confidence of the Roman Catholics in the measures which had been taken to weaken their adversaries, that they remained perfectly at ease, and unconscious of the approaching danger. In the latter end of September, however, Monsieur de Castelnau, who had been sent on a mission into the Low Countries, joined the court at Monceaux, bringing with him intelligence of all the designs of the Prince de Condé and the Admiral, which he had gained from some French Protestants on the road. The court treated his information with contempt; and he was even severely censured for giving unnecessary alarm. But messenger after messenger soon arrived at Monceaux, with tidings from several parts of the country, which so far confirmed the statement

of Castelnau, that one of his brothers was despatched to make more particular inquiries. What he saw and heard was calculated farther to increase the alarm; but, nevertheless, the council still turned a deaf ear to all the warnings it received; and a gentleman, who was sent to the Admiral, for the purpose of discovering his proceedings, strengthened the court in its confidence, by declaring, that he found Coligni, "dressed as a good housekeeper, carrying on the vintage." The chief object, indeed, of the Protestant leaders, was to conceal their design till it was on the eve of execution. Those who arrived at Chatillon were immediately sent away, after receiving their directions. Tanlay was named as the meeting place of the army; and orders were given to the Huguenot leaders throughout all France, to take arms on the same day, and to gain the greatest advantages they could in their several districts.*

The moment of action at length arrived, and in one day, fifty towns were captured† in different parts of the kingdom. The commanders in the principal strong places at which the Protestants aimed, were upon their guard, however; and against them the enterprise failed; nor was it more successful in regard to the court. Intelligence reached Monceaux on the twenty-seventh, that a large body of Protestant horse had appeared at Rosay, but a few leagues from the residence of the Queen; and had Condé and the Admiral marched on at once, the

* La Noue. † Memoires de Tavannes.

King, his mother, and the greater part of the families of Montmorenci and Lorraine, must inevitably have fallen into their hands. But the day which had been appointed for the attack was the eve of St. Michael, when it was supposed that a much larger number of Roman Catholic nobles would be present; and thus a fatal delay of a few hours took place, which gave the court time to fly from Monceaux to Meaux, in haste and disarray.

Castelnau, sent to reconnoitre the enemy, impeded their advance by destroying the bridges; messengers were despatched to call the Swiss from Chateau Thierry; and after a night spent in consternation and long deliberations, as to whether it would be better to endeavor to appease the Protestants by disbanding the foreign troops, or to remain in Meaux and run the risk of a siege, or to traverse the open country in arms in order to reach Paris; the latter course was determined upon; and early in the morning of the twenty-ninth, the King and the court, in the centre of the Swiss battalions, commenced their march for the capital. Ere they had made any great progress, the Prince de Condé appeared at the head of his cavalry, and some unimportant skirmishing took place. Six thousand Swiss infantry were too formidable a body for Condé to attack,* with only five hundred horse at his command except under very favorable circumstances; and he contented himself with pursuing them on the road to Paris, charging from time to time, and endeavoring to take advantage of every

* La Noue.

accident to throw them into confusion. We are assured, that had a troop of a hundred and fifty horse arquebusiers, which were expected from Picardy, arrived in time at the rendezvous, the Prince would have risked a general engagement; but although the Protestants had shewed no hesitation in taking arms at the call of their leaders, yet they had been less prompt in obeying the orders on which the success of the whole scheme depended, and the numbers which presented themselves at the general place of meeting, did not amount to one half of those which had been expected. Thus the court was suffered to on; a body of troops came out from Paris to escort the King, and met him at some distance; and the Swiss, fatigued with long duty, halted at Bourget, under the command of the Constable, while the monarch and his mother hastened on to the capital, rejoicing at their deliverance.

The Huguenots, however, boldly kept the field, although the prey had escaped them, hoping, in the unprepared state of Paris, to reduce the Roman Catholic party within the walls, and to make peace on advantageous terms by the strong inducement of famine.* The first act of the Prince de Condé, was to seize upon the small town of St. Denis, and two villages in the immediate vicinity of the capital, which he fortified to the best of his power, while waiting for reinforcements from the provinces. The very act spread consternation amongst the leaders of the Roman Catholic party, who could

* La Noue. Aubigné.

not imagine that the Admiral, whom they knew to be cautious and prudent, would suffer his rasher companion to take up his position with no other force than between five and six hundred cavalry, within so short a distance of the metropolis, in which were ten thousand good troops,* unless he had some correspondence within the place itself, as well as the certainty of a vast and speedy addition to his army. Under these circumstances, the Queen had recourse once more to the old means of negotiation. Her object in this case, as in most others, was only to gain time; but delay was as necessary to Condé and the Admiral, as to the court; for although the Prince carried on the war with extraordinary vigor and rapidity, considering the small number of his forces, seized upon the passages of the rivers, burned the mills, cut off the supplies of the capital, and ventured to skirmish at the very gates, several days passed without his receiving any considerable reinforcement; and the little body of the Huguenots, besieging the great city of Paris, was, to use the expression of La Noue, but "as an ant attacking an elephant."

Conferences between the leaders on both sides, were interspersed with combats all over the country round the metropolis, and each party sent off messengers, to call for succor in the extraordinary war in which they were engaged. Protestant and Catholic forces hastened up towards the scene of action from different parts of the realm; and while Castel-

* La Noue.

nau was despatched, to beseech the Duke of Alva to march the troops, which he had just led into the Low Countries, to the assistance of the court,* envoys from Condé and the Admiral eagerly urged the German Princes to send a body of auxiliaries to the aid of their fellow-Protestants in France.†

In order to secure the line of advance of the German army, which he expected, Condé endeavored to gain possession of the principal towns upon the Marne and Seine; but the enterprises of the Protestants in that quarter failed at all points, except at Lagny and Montereau; and on the other hand, the negotiations of Castelnau in the Low Countries, were unsuccessful in obtaining prompt support for the court, as the Duke of Alva evaded his request, for the aid of two thousand light horse and four regiments of Spanish foot, by offering repeatedly to march himself at the head of his whole forces, which would have put the capital of France entirely at his mercy.‡

In the meantime, however, the little army of the Prince de Condé, received considerable reinforcements from the provinces. An entire regiment joined him from Normandy; Montgomery, La Noue, and other celebrated commanders, hastened to his assistance; and La Noue, despatched to Orleans with only fifteen men, introduced himself into that city, and after a brief struggle in the streets made himself master of the town. He then, with equal skill and boldness, attacked the citadel with

* Memoires de Castelnau, lib. vi. page 201.

† La Noue. ‡ Memoires de Castelnau.

only three hundred men, and after a furious assault forced the governor to surrender.

But, on the other hand, fresh troops arrived in Paris, and the army of the King, without counting the armed citizens, amounted to at least three times the number of the Protestants ;* but still, for more than a month, the Prince de Condé maintained his position at St. Denis ; and Montmorenci did not venture to attack him, till a body of two thousand cavalry from the Low Countries, under Castelnau and Count d'Aremberg, approached the flank of the Huguenot forces. To prevent them passing the river at Poissy, Condé detached D'Andelot with five hundred horse and eight hundred arquebusiers ; and, seizing the opportunity, while the little army of the Huguenots was thus weakened, the Constable issued forth from the gates of the capital at the head of the royalist army, and at daybreak on the tenth of November marched to give battle to the enemy. The Prince de Condé himself had his headquarters at this time, in the small town of St. Denis, the Admiral being at St. Ouin on the right; while

* It is impossible to ascertain exactly, what were the numbers of the Roman Catholic army. Aubigné declares, that there were at this time in Paris, eighteen thousand regular French infantry, six thousand Swiss, four thousand heavy cavalry, and an immense number of armed citizens ; and we find from Castelnau, that, besides those necessary for the defence of the town, the King had disposable, twenty pieces of artillery. It is certain, however, that under Montmorenci at the battle of St. Denis, there were only sixteen thousand foot, and two thousand heavy horse engaged. La Noue.

on the left was a celebrated commander of the name of Genlis, in the village of Aubervilliers.*

The plan of the Constable,—who never imagined, it would seem, that the inferior Protestant force, without artillery, without the advantage of the ground, and without any of those battalions of pikemen so formidable to the cavalry of those days, would venture to meet him in the open field,—was to drive the Admiral and Genlis out of the villages they occupied by the fire of his artillery; and, concluding that those two officers would retreat upon St. Denis, to cut off D'Andelot and Montgomery from the main body.

He was disappointed in his expectations, however; the Prince and the Admiral took counsel together, and it was determined to march out at once and risk a battle, notwithstanding all the disadvantages under which the Protestants labored. Intelligence, received the preceding night of the Constable's intention, had induced Condé to send off messengers to D'Andelot requiring his immediate return; and had that officer been able to accomplish the march from Poissy in time, there can be little doubt, from the vigor and determination displayed by the Huguenots, both officers and men, that a great victory would have been gained, which would have put the capital and the court at the mercy of the Reformers. But D'Andelot did not receive the summons till the battle had actually commenced, and could not reach St. Denis before midnight. The Protestant army began its march as soon as the forces

* La Noue. Castelnau.

of the Constable appeared; the Prince de Condé commanding the centre, the Admiral the right wing, and Genlis the left. Each flank was guarded by a small body of horse-arquebusiers and foot; and the regular cavalry was ranged, according to the old chivalrous custom, in single line, their numbers being too small to afford a rear rank.*

The infantry was at first kept in reserve to support the cavalry, but the artillery of the Constable, having thrown the Protestant horse on the left into some disorder, Condé commanded Genlis to bring his infantry into action; and the arquebusiers on both flanks were pushed forward, firing into the enemy's squadrons, at fifty paces distance, with terrible effect. The Admiral charged at the same time at the head of his cavalry, and Condé, seeing the right and left wing engaged, passed his own infantry, who were actually forming in front, and attacked the main body of the Catholics, led by the Constable himself, with such fury, that the greater part of Montmorenci's division gave way, leaving their veteran commander in the heart of the mêlée.

Though now eighty years of age, Montmorenci fought hand to hand with the enemy, and would not yield a foot of ground. Assailed in front by one of the Protestant gentlemen, he ran him through the body with his sword, but at the same moment received the shot of a pistol in the loins, it is sup-

* Castelnau. La Noue blames this disposition, and implies it would have been better, under any circumstances, to form the cavalry into squadrons.

posed, from the hand of an officer of Scottish descent, named Stuart. Upon him the old hero now turned, and striking him in the mouth, with the pommel of his sword, dashed out several of his teeth; but two more wounds, one in the face, and one in the head, exhausted the strength that yet remained, and the gallant warrior fell fainting from his horse, just as his cavalry were rallying to repulse their assailants. Being raised from the ground, and recalled to life, he looked round, exclaiming, "There is yet daylight. Why do ye waste your time here? Pursue the enemy, for the victory is ours."

But although what he said was true, and the Protestant force was by this time in retreat, the Catholics having rallied after the first shock, yet the royal army had suffered so severely, that they did not venture to follow their adversaries, who fell back upon St. Denis, just as night appeared. Some doubt was afterwards raised, indeed, as to the question by whom the victory was gained; for the good burgesses of Paris had fled diligently, and never returned to the field, and the loss on the part of the royalists was considerably greater than that of the Protestants. But the field of battle remained with the Roman Catholic army; and La Noue himself admits, with his usual straightforward frankness, that his party was defeated.

The Prince de Condé, however, seeking to diminish the glory acquired by his opponents, marched out of St. Denis on the following day, with trumpets sounding and banners displayed, crossed the scene

of the battle uninterrupted, presented himself at the gates of Paris, and finding no enemy in the field to oppose him, burned the village of la Chapelle, and some windmills close to the walls of the capital,* making a parade of strength and resolution, which probably would not have been suffered to pass unnoticed, but for the consternation which was spread amongst the Roman Catholic party, by the declining state of the Constable. Montmorenci died two days after the battle, more regretted by the court at his death, than trusted during his life.

The determination shewn by the Huguenot leaders, in engaging, without cannon, so superior an army well provided with artillery, and insulting the Papists in the capital, though not victorious in the battle, greatly increased their reputation, strengthened their faction, and obviated all the worst consequences of defeat. The presence of D'Andelot, and the corps which he had led to Poissy, might have enabled them still to keep possession of St. Denis and the neighboring villages for some weeks; but various causes combined to render it expedient, that they should give up an attempt, the most favorable result of which, could be nothing more than to starve the court into a new treaty of peace, as insincere and frail as that which had preceded it. Count d'Aremberg, with the Flemish horse, afforded a reinforcement to the royal army, more numerous than that which D'Andelot brought to the Prince de Condé; and troops of Roman Catholic nobles poured hourly into Paris from the provinces, so that the forces at

* La Noue. Castelnau.

the disposal of the court soon promised to be more than sufficient both to defend the capital, and meet the enemy in the field.

At the same time, intelligence was received at the head-quarters of the Protestants, that John Casimir, son of the Elector Palatine, was marching rapidly to join them, at the head of seven thousand reiters, and six thousand lanzknechts. The failure of the enterprise against several of the towns upon the Marne and Seine, rendered the line of his advance insecure; and even had there been a probability of Condé being able to maintain himself, for any length of time, in the neighbourhood of Paris, it would have been advisable for him to hasten to effect his junction with the German auxiliaries, which would put at his disposal the most formidable force that the Protestants had yet brought into the field. All these considerations induced the Prince and the Admiral, to decamp from St. Denis two days after the battle, and direct their march upon Montereau, despatching couriers to Orleans and Etampes, with orders for the Protestant forces assembled in those towns, to join them as soon as possible.

No time was lost by the Queen-mother ere she made efforts both to strengthen her own power, against the party to which she had attached herself, and to embarrass the movements of the Huguenots. She refused to renew the commission of Constable after the death of Montmorenci, but she bestowed the post of Lieutenant-general on her second son,

the Duke of Anjou, who, accompanied by the Duke of Nemours, and Marshal Cossé, immediately set out in pursuit of Condé, with the view of preventing his junction with his German allies. At the same time the Duke of Aumale, brother of the murdered Duke of Guise, was despatched in haste to the frontiers of Lorraine, to raise all the forces which could be mustered in Burgundy and Champagne, for the purpose of opposing the entrance of the reiters into France.*

Nor was Catherine wanting in her usual arts. In order to delay the progress of the Protestant army, and to enable her son to attack it at a disadvantage, she pursued Condé with negotiations, and twice prevailed upon him to grant a suspension of arms, each for several days. On the second occasion, the Prince weakly consented to halt and treat in the neighbourhood of Chalons, in Champagne, in an unfavorable position, where, if assailed, his defeat must have been inevitable.† The imprudence, however, of Brissac, frustrated the views of the court; for, meeting with a small body of Protestants he attacked and routed them, without regard to the existing truce.‡ This act warned the Prince de Condé how little he could trust to the sincerity of his enemies; and, without farther delay, he struck his tents and marched into Lorraine, through difficult and dangerous roads, with scanty provisions, and in

* Memoires de Castelnau. † La Noue.

‡ Castelnau attributes the escape of Condé, on this occasion, rather to the tardiness than the over-activity of the Catholic leaders.

the midst of a stormy and tempestuous season. Nevertheless, so well conducted was the whole movement, that, notwithstanding the many obstacles on the way, not a gun nor a baggage-waggon was lost, and the Protestants entered the duchy and took up a position, which rendered their junction with the German auxiliaries no longer doubtful.* Still John Casimir did not appear, and fear and consternation began to spread through the Huguenot army. Many of the principal leaders were affected by the same apprehensions as their soldiers, and remonstrances and complaints were addressed to Condé and the Admiral, drawing from the latter a reply, which La Noue has not thought unworthy to be recorded in his Commentaries. Condé treated the fears of the Protestant nobility with joyous raillery; but when the Admiral was asked, what they must do if the reiters did not arrive, and the army of the court pursued them, he replied quietly, "March to Bacharach," which was the place where the German troops were to assemble: "But if they are not there," demanded some one, "what must we do then?" "Blow our fingers, I suppose," replied the Admiral, "for it is very cold."

During six days,† no tidings of the German reinforcements reached the head-quarters of the Prince de Condé; but at the end of that time intelligence of their approach was received. With this gratifying information, however, came a demand for one hundred thousand crowns, which the Protes-

* La Noue. † Aubigné.

tant envoys had promised to the commanders of the reiters, upon their entrance into the kingdom of France. The amount possessed by the Prince de Condé, in ready money, did not exceed two thousand; and yet the well known character of the German forces admitted not a doubt, that they would refuse to march, if any delay took place in making the stipulated payment. In this case of extreme necessity, recourse was had to the generosity and devotion of the Huguenot army. The Prince and the Admiral led the way, giving up their plate, their jewels and all the money they had brought with them; the nobles and the clergy followed, the preachers exhorted the people to contribute to the utmost of their power; the officers harangued their soldiers to the same effect; and the enthusiasm became general. Every man stripped himself of all that he could spare, even the servants and camp-followers brought in their offering, and amongst a body of men who had found great difficulty in providing themselves with sustenance, the large sum required was speedily collected.*

No sooner had the reiters joined and received their pay, than it was determined to march back into the heart of France, and once more carry on the war in the neighbourhood of the capital. Numerous obstacles presented themselves to the execution of this design, in the midst of a rigorous winter, with an army forced to live upon the people, the great body of whom were opposed to the insurgents in religious

* La Noue. Aubigné.

belief. The utmost care of the commissariat was taken by the Admiral; and, though obliged by the severity of the season, to quarter the troops each night upon a wide extended line, with the cavalry in remote villages upon the flanks, and the infantry gathered as closely as possible together in the centre, such was the vigilance maintained in watching, and the good organization established for the provision of supplies, that neither want nor loss took place during the long march from Lorraine to the Orleanois.*

While these movements occurred in the centre and north-eastern parts of France, the Protestants, as we have before mentioned, had risen almost to a man throughout the rest of the realm; nor were the Roman Catholic leaders in the different provinces inactive in opposing them. The old system of cruelty was resumed on both sides; and although the balance of success in the field was decidedly in favor of the Protestants, the struggle was equally disgraceful to both parties, and altogether disastrous in its result to France. To dwell upon the various minor operations in remote parts of the country, would only fatigue the reader, without giving him any thing but a confused notion of that which was in itself confused; and it may be only necessary to say, that before the Prince de Condé arrived at Orleans, the city had been gallantly succored during an attack made upon it by the Catholics, and that the beautiful town of Blois was taken by Mouvans, a

* La Noue.

distinguished leader of the Huguenots.* A large force of Protestants was thus assembled on the banks of the Loire, during the march of Condé and the Admiral, from Pont-a-Mouson to the centre of France, and it was determined, immediately on the Prince's arrival, to undertake the siege of Chartres, which was at once commenced. Though of little importance in a military point of view, the Catholics resolved to defend that large and ancient city to the last, and an officer of the name of Lignières threw himself into the place, and held it out against the Protestant forces with great skill and gallantry.

In the meanwhile, the Queen-mother,—seeing the army of the enemy swelled to between twenty and thirty thousand men, a number of the principal places in the realm in the hands of the insurgents, the balance of success decidedly in their favor, the country ravaged and exhausted by the troops of all parties, and the great mass of the French people loudly murmuring at the continuance of this disastrous war, determined once more to treat for peace, and probably was sincere in so doing. At first, the Protestants imagined that her overtures were, as usual, but artifices for the purpose of gaining time, while Castelnau was despatched to Germany to hire bodies of mercenaries for the service of the court. But to convince them that, in this view of her conduct, they were mistaken, Catherine sent without delay to stop the advance of a body of five thousand reiters who had

* Aubigné. Castelnau.

already reached Rethel; and the negotiations, which had been commenced, were hurried on rapidly by the Baron de Biron and the Lord of Malassise, on the part of the Catholics, with the Cardinal de Chatillon on the other side. Catherine indeed, neglected not to employ the power of gold upon the foreign troops in the service of the Huguenots, and met with considerable success. Daily desertions took place from the army before Chartres; and the Prince de Condé, notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Admiral, gave his weight to the party desirous of peace.

A treaty was at length concluded, which assured to the Protestants the same advantages which had been granted in 1563, expressed in more definite terms, and freed from all the corrupt interpretations, by which the Roman Catholic faction had subsequently loaded the edict of that year. The court undertook to satisfy the Protestant auxiliaries, and also to send out of the kingdom without any delay all the foreign forces which had been called to the standard of the King. But it was with great difficulty that the first of these promises was fulfilled; and an attempt made to deceive the reiters under John Casimir, and to send them out of the kingdom unpaid, had nearly proved fatal to Castelnau himself, and produced terrible ravages and disasters in the provinces where they were quartered. A portion of the arrears was ultimately discharged, a considerable present mollified their chief, and the kingdom was at length delivered from the scourge of a large body of mutinous and licentious troops.

It would appear, that, notwithstanding vows and assurances of the most solemn kind, the Roman Catholic party did not entertain the slightest intention of keeping their engagements one moment after it became convenient to break them ;* and that the Protestants were equally far from anticipating anything like a sincere execution of the terms of the treaty, which received immediately the ludicrous name of ' la paix boiteuse et mal assise,' on account of Biron, one of the negotiators for the crown, being lame, and the name of the other being easily rendered the subject of a bad jest. Condé and the Admiral separated after the signature of the act; and all the principal leaders of the Huguenot party retired to their estates in the country, leaving the court completely in possession of the Roman Catholics.

Several authors have blamed this step, and in some of the letters of the time we find plain indications of a design to cut off the Protestant chiefs, in detail, in various parts of France.† Many of those who were friendly to them, even amongst the Catholics, censured them for the apparent want of caution which their conduct displayed; but Le Laboureur more justly observes, that their safety was really found in this seeming act of imprudence, inasmuch, as while thus scattered through every province in the kingdom, and prepared at a moment's notice to take arms, a net could not be found large enough to envelope them all. The justness of this

* See Pasquier's Letters. Le Laboureur, &c. † Pasquier.

observation was shewn not long after by the fatal result of a different line of conduct.

Each party, however, felt that its position was insecure, and each party began immediately to infringe the terms of the treaty; the one actuated by the eager desire of suppressing the Protestant faith, the other, by anxiety to guard against new persecutions. The state of the country, at this time, and the causes which brought about a speedy renewal of the war, may best be displayed, by giving the words of a very impartial contemporary, who took an active part on the side of the Catholics in all that he relates, but yet does not attempt to conceal the gross infractions of every engagement committed by the court.

After saying, that to all appearance, France, having endured the scourge of civil war, might have been expected for some time to appreciate the blessings of peace, Monsieur de Castelnau goes on to observe, "But the mutual suspicion of the Catholics and the Huguenots, joined to the ambition of the leaders, and the remembrance, on the part of the court, of the enterprise at Meaux, soon begat new troubles, as dangerous as the first and second, or more so; the occasion of which, some attributed to the disobedience of certain towns, that would not absolutely submit to the power of his majesty, amongst which, the most mutinous were, Sancerre, Montauban, and some others in Quercy, Vivarez, and Languedoc.

"Thus, likewise, La Rochelle, which refused to receive the garrison that Jarnac, its former governor,

wished to place in it, and afterwards the Mareschal de Vielleville, by command of his Majesty; nor would suffer the Catholics to be restored to their goods, employments and offices, or to enjoy the edict of pacification. On the contrary, infringing thereupon, Rochelle carried on its fortifications, and equipped a great number of vessels of war, as much to the prejudice of the King's service, as the troops which several Huguenot captains led into Flanders, to the succor of the Prince of Orange against the Duke of Alva, levied and conducted without the King's authority or commission: amongst which the body that Coqueville had raised in Normandy, (disavowed however by the Prince de Condé) were defeated at Valery by the Mareschal de Cossé, who cut off his (Coqueville's) head, as well as those of several other commanders of regiments."

"On the other part, the negotiations which were carried on at the court of Rome, for the purpose of obtaining from his Holiness permission to alienate a hundred and fifty thousand crowns of the temporal revenues of the church, in order to employ the sum which would be furnished by the sale, for the extermination of the Huguenot religion; the brotherhoods and frequent assemblies which took place in Burgundy, and (as the Huguenots insisted, at the instigation of Tavannes, an adherent of the house of Guise,) the regiments of Brissac; and the companies of men-at-arms, which poured into that province, to surprise, they said, the Prince de Condé, who had retired to his town of Noyers, and the Admiral to

Tanlé ;* the maintenance of the Swiss and Italian troops, which were sent to garrison Tours, Orleans, and other principal towns; and the great number of cavalry and infantry which were kept in the neighbourhood of Paris to guard his Majesty,—cast the Huguenots into great apprehension."†

It must be remembered, that the court, as well as the Huguenot party, had pledged itself to send all foreign troops out of the kingdom; and Castelnau blames the Protestant leaders severely, for not having insisted upon keeping in their hands the principal towns which they had taken, till the terms of the treaty were fulfilled. The Swiss and Italian forces were retained; and the Huguenot writers accuse the court of numerous other infractions of the edict of pacification. The charge brought by the Catholics against Rochelle was greatly exaggerated; for it is shewn, that the citizens of that place did not absolutely refuse to receive Jarnac, although they would not permit him to introduce such a body of troops, as would have put the town at his mercy ;‡ and, before the arrival of Vielleville, every precaution was justified by the excesses committed by the Roman Catholics, who, excited to massacre by the Jesuits and other preachers, had reached so

* Sometimes written Tanlay, but in the Memoires de Castelnau it is spelt as above.

† I have translated these passages baldly, and placed them in the same ill-constructed periods in which they stand in the original, thinking it better to leave the sense somewhat obscure and confused, than to risk any alteration of the author's meaning.

‡ Le Laboureur.

atrocious a point, that we are assured, in three months, ten thousand Protestants had been slaughtered in different towns of France, amongst whom were several persons of the first distinction. The Count de Tende himself, was poignarded, with thirty of his attendants, by D'Arci, the governor of Forgues in Provence, to whom he had surrendered; and many other actions of the grossest barbarity are related by the historians of the time, which might well shew the Protestant leaders, that there was no safety but in the resumption of arms.*

Even Anquetil acknowledges, that the most abominable maxims were openly advanced by the Roman Catholics, and that it was publicly announced, no faith was to be kept with heretics, while to massacre them, was proclaimed just, pious, and tending to salvation. "The fruits of these discourses," he continues, "were either public tumults or private assassinations, for which no justice was to be obtained. Evil to those in Paris and in the provinces, who either maintained, or even had once entertained, any intimacy with the Huguenot chiefs; poison, the poignard, the slow execution of the dungeon, destroyed them everywhere, and with them, the apprehensions of which they were the cause."†

* Aubigné, liv. V. chap. 1.

† Anquetil, who seldom suffers any statement to remain as he found it, says that the Protestants complained that two thousand of their number had been slaughtered in three months; but that this account must have been exaggerated. The words of Aubigné, however, are distinct, and he says ten thousand. The old folio edition has the number also in figures.

No moderation was shewn at the court, no half-measures were permitted. The Chancellor, who was supposed to be favorable to the Protestants, was dismissed, and banished to his estates in the country.* Catherine gave herself up entirely to the counsels of the Cardinal of Lorraine; and whoever ventured to urge the necessity of keeping faith and doing justice to the oppressed Calvinists, was stigmatized with the name of Politic, which soon became a word of reproach amongst the zealous Papists. As if intending to drive the leaders of the Huguenot party to despair, the Queen chose this moment for insisting that Condé and the Admiral should immediately reimburse the treasury with the sum of a hundred thousand crowns of gold, which had been paid to John Casimir and the German reiters; and, to crown all, Tavannes received orders to arrest the Prince and Coligni, who were then in consultation at Noyers.

Notwithstanding his zeal for the Roman Catholic religion, his attachment to the house of Guise, and his desire of advancing himself in the royal favor, Tavannes was by no means pleased with the odious and dangerous task thus forced upon him; and, without absolutely betraying his trust, he took means to ensure that Condé should receive intimation of the designs of the Queen. A messenger bearing letters from himself to the court, which contained the following words:—"The stag is in the toils, and the hunt is ready," was intercepted in the immediate

* Journal de Bruslart.

neighbourhood of Noyers, by the attendants of the Prince; and men were openly sent to examine the ditches of the castle. These signs were not lost upon Condé and his friends, who without delay prepared to fly from the approaching danger. They were embarrassed, however, by the multitude of women, children, and attached dependants, who were with them in the castle. But, encouraged by the marks of good will which they could not but perceive in the conduct of Tavannes, they set out on the twenty-fifth of August, 1568.* The two leaders were accompanied by the Princess de Condé, who was far advanced in pregnancy, by Madame D'Andelot, by Mademoiselle de Chatillon, the daughter of Coligni, several other ladies, and even children at the breast. The number of their escort is very differently stated by different writers, Castelnau reducing it to between forty and fifty, and Auvigny and others making it amount to a hundred and fifty.† Whatever was the number, it is clear that the force which Condé took with him, was perfectly inadequate to defend the party of fugitives against the troops of Tavannes and the Marshal de Vielleville, had those two officers strictly obeyed the orders of the court. It is admitted, indeed, on all hands, that Tavannes connived at the escape of Condé; and there is every reason to suppose that Vielleville pursued the same line of conduct, although

* Memoires de Castelnau.

† Aubigné makes the number a hundred and sixty.

the fact is not acknowledged in the memoirs of that nobleman.

Before setting out from Noyers, the two chiefs composed a manifesto in justification of their conduct, narrating the long series of crimes, the murders, the massacres, and the infractions of the treaty of peace which had been committed by the Roman Catholic party since the commencement of the year; attributing the whole to the instigations of the Cardinal of Lorraine and his family, and declaring that, against him and the house of Guise, should henceforth be directed all the efforts of the Protestants. The document was despatched to the court by the secretary of the Prince, who was immediately arrested and cast into prison; while the fugitives, in the midst of difficulty, danger, and fatigues, made their way with extraordinary rapidity to Rochelle, and there raised the standard of revolt.

At the same time the Cardinal de Chatillon effected his escape into England, to negotiate with Elizabeth for assistance in the war which the Protestants were driven to resume. D'Andelot, La Noue, and other distinguished Huguenots, hastened to join the Prince and the Admiral; and letters were written to the leaders of the party, in the different provinces of France, containing directions to raise troops, and march towards Rochelle with all speed. Numbers flocked in every day; and the steps taken by the court, probably at the suggestion of the Cardinal of Lorraine, were calculated alone to give the vigor

of despair to the oppressed Calvinists. No sooner was the arrival of Condé at Rochelle known, than the exercise of the Protestant religion was prohibited, under the most severe penalties, and a grand religious procession took place on the occasion as if this act of intolerance was a subject of general rejoicing.* A keen inquiry was likewise instituted, into the opinions of all the officers of the court, and the members of the parliament. But no powerful means were employed to crush the insurrection in the bud,—no army hastened to attack Condé in Rochelle, or to impede the progress which the Protestants were already making in Saintonge and Angoumois. The mind of the Queen-mother, artful, politic, and dexterous in negotiation, was unfit for strong and decisive action; and the qualities of the Cardinal of Lorraine were not those which might have rendered him competent to the direction of great military enterprises. Thus, though he persuaded Catherine to abandon the line of conduct best suited to her genius, he only prompted her to violent designs and rash acts, without guiding her to follow them up by resolute and vigorous measures.

In the meantime, the Protestants, without hope of moderation or justice on the part of their enemies, felt the necessity of the greatest exertion, activity, and determination. No one thought himself any longer secure; the course adopted by the court rendered the only chance of safety, the taking of arms; and such was the indignation aroused, and the

* Journal de Bruslart.

resolution displayed, that scarcely was it announced in Provence and Languedoc, that Condé was assembling an army at Rochelle, before the Lord of Acier commenced his march to join the Prince with a force of eighteen thousand men.* Nearly at the same period, a still more important addition was made to the Protestant party at Rochelle, by the arrival of the Queen of Navarre and her son, with four thousand men, raised in Bearn and the neighbouring districts.† Although the force of Acier was much more considerable in point of numbers, and far better armed than the small body which accompanied Jeanne d'Albret, yet her name was worth another army to the Huguenot leaders; and the complete union amongst the Protestant Princes, which her junction with Condé displayed, tended more to consolidate the party, to intimidate their enemies, to give confidence to their friends, and to obtain the cordial co-operation of foreign powers, than any event which had taken place during the whole course of the civil wars.

On her arrival, the Queen of Navarre solemnly dedicated her son to the defence of the Protestant faith, and published a declaration announcing the causes which compelled her, contrary to her wishes, to take arms for her own security, and for general

* La Noue. Castelnau reckons the number of men under Acier, after the defeat of Mouvans, at no more than four thousand men. But the statement of La Noue may be fully relied upon.

† Aubigné.

liberty of conscience. The young Prince was placed under the especial charge of the Prince de Condé and the Admiral, who undertook to instruct him in that art in which he afterwards so greatly distinguished himself through the long course of a troublous military life.

Hostilities were immediately commenced; and, in a very short time, an immense number of towns were taken by the Protestants; against whom the Duke de Montpensier, who commanded in that part of the country, could bring no sufficient force. That Prince, however, exerted himself vigorously, and skilfully, to prevent the junction of various bodies of Huguenot troops with the army of the Prince de Condé; and two regiments having detached themselves too far from the great reinforcement led by Acier, were cut off, and totally routed; two celebrated leaders, Mouvans and Pierre Gourdes, being killed upon the field. The loss was, nevertheless, insignificant, compared with the advantages gained every day by the army of the Princes, and with the additions which their forces received from all parts of the kingdom. Nor was the Queen of England slow in sending them supplies. In the course of the autumn, six pieces of artillery, a quantity of ammunition, and a considerable sum of money reached Rochelle from Great Britain;* and more important aid was promised, both by Elizabeth and by the German Princes, to whom applications for

* Castelnau.

assistance had been immediately directed, upon the renewal of the war.

At length the court threw off its inactivity; and the Duke of Anjou, for whom an army had been slowly preparing in the Orleanois, began his march to join the Duke of Montpensier, who was by this time retreating rapidly before the superior force of the Huguenots, having found it impossible to induce the different Roman Catholic leaders who were scattered over Guienne and Poitou, to obey his orders, or bring him reinforcements.* The troops which were now at the disposal of the Duke of Anjou, amounted to twelve thousand French infantry, four thousand cavalry, and a large body of Swiss auxiliaries; the whole estimated at twenty-four thousand men, together with a strong train of artillery. Advancing by rapid marches he reached Chatellerault on Friday, the twelfth of November, where he was joined by the Catholic forces commanded by Montpensier.

The army of the court was now superior to that of Condé both in numbers and equipment; but the Protestant leaders shewed no inclination to avoid a battle, trusting to the goodness of their cause, and the enthusiasm of their troops. They followed Montpensier so closely on his march to meet the Duke of Anjou, that they continually slept where he had passed the previous night; and even after the junction of the two bodies of royalists, they pressed

* Memoires de Montpensier.

so hard upon the enemy, that the baggage of the Duke of Guise and of Brissac fell into their hands. Shortly after they seized upon a village, to which the Roman Catholic forces were directing their march, and compelled them to return into Lusignan.* But it often happens that the presence of a personage of great importance, though it may inspirit the soldiers of an army under his command, brings doubt and hesitation into the councils of the leaders, unless he have himself sufficient experience and decision to judge and act without depending upon the opinion of others. Such would seem to have been the case in the army of the Duke of Anjou, for certainly it has seldom occurred that more opportunities have been lost, of fighting an inferior enemy to advantage, than in the campaign of which I now speak. Near a month was spent in fruitless marches and countermarches; and even after the arrival of the Duke de Joyeuse, with considerable reinforcements, though Anjou advanced towards Loudun, he suffered

* The Duke of Anjou on this occasion lost an admirable opportunity of defeating the Admiral, who had advanced, to take possession of the village, to a considerable distance from the Prince de Condé, and found himself suddenly in presence of a superior enemy. Coligni, however, concealed his weakness, by covering the top of a hill by his troops, with a valley in his rear. Martigues, who commanded the Roman Catholic horse, apparently imagined that this valley contained the army of the Prince de Condé; and he was confirmed in the opinion that a large force was present, by seeing a number of men in a village behind. These he took to be arquebusiers, but they were in fact merely servants and camp followers.—See La Noue, page 933.

Condé to seize upon that town before him, and though the enemy presented themselves in order of battle, he did not take advantage of his superiority to risk a general engagement.

It has been asserted, that had the counsels of a boy been of any weight with the Protestant leaders, a great victory might have been obtained by the Huguenots at Loudun; for the Prince of Bearn expressed a strong opinion, that from some cause the army of the court was weaker than it seemed. "Otherwise," he said, "the Duke of Anjou would attack us." He judged, in consequence, that the policy of the Huguenot leaders was to force a battle upon the enemy,* who, it must be remarked, were little favored by position. It is probable, however, that a hollow way which lay between the two armies, and the severe frost which rendered the ground so slippery that neither horses nor men could keep their feet,† were the real causes of both parties avoiding an engagement. The Catholics and Protestants went into quarters, within a short distance of each other; and the extreme rigor of the season rendering farther movements in the field very hazardous, all operations were suspended for about a month; during which time, Condé, Coligni, and the young Prince of Bearn, proceeded to Niort, and, in conjunction with the Queen of Navarre, labored hard to recruit their forces, and to obtain money for

* Perefixe. Cayet.

† Vie du Duc de Montpensier. Aubigné.

carrying on the war.* Elizabeth was strongly pressed to give more efficient aid, and we find, in a letter from Sir Henry Norris to Cecil, that this was judged a convenient moment to renew the applications of the English court for the restoration of Calais; less, indeed, with a hope of gaining such a concession, than with the design of embarrassing Catherine in her proceedings against the Huguenots. From the same source, we discover, that notwithstanding the powerful army which had been raised to put down the insurrection, the court of France was in a situation of great difficulty and consternation. Important assistance had been promised by Spain, but great delays had taken place, and doubts were now entertained as to the execution of Philip's engagements. But little aid was to be expected from Germany; and the young King was taken ill in the beginning of the winter, and for some days was unable to quit his bed. At the same time the Protestants continued arming throughout the country; the Duke of Deux Ponts was levying a large force to give them support, which was magnified by rumor into an army of twelve thousand horse and twenty-five thousand foot;† and a report which was current at one period, that the Cardinal of Lorraine had been shot in the streets of Rheims, was not altogether without foundation, though the principal fact was false. An arquebuse was dis-

* Aubigné.

† See correspondence of the reign of Elizabeth; letters from Norris to Cecil, and Leicester to Randolph.

charged into his carriage as he was going through the streets of that city; but the assassin missed his aim, and the bullet took effect upon an Italian attendant who was with the Cardinal, killing him on the spot. Indeed such crimes were now common on both parts, and the history of the third civil war is stained with enormities of the most horrible and revolting character. The great weight of guilt, it is true, was upon the side of the Papists; and the tales which are told by their own writers, of the dark and infamous deeds they committed,—of the butcheries in cold blood perpetrated by Montluc, Montpensier, and others, the violation of all faith, the disregard of every thing like justice, and the acts in which lust and murder went hand in hand,—present a terrible picture, and also an awful example of the state of degradation to which the human mind may be reduced by the influence of a religion of persecution and superstition. We would willingly turn our eyes from such scenes, did the annals of the times not repeat them so frequently, that they must be recorded, however painful may be the task.*

Early in the spring, the two armies once more took the field; and the force of the Duke of Anjou, now strengthened by a considerable body of reiters, marched to attack the Huguenots, whose numbers had been greatly diminished by the severity of the

* The reader who wishes to enter into further investigation of the atrocities committed by the Roman Catholic leaders, has only to look into Brantome, Castelnau, and Le Laboureur; all papistical writers.

season, and by the necessity of supplying the different towns taken, with sufficient garrisons. Condé and the Admiral, finding themselves weakened, and yet unwilling to retreat into the strong places behind them, determined to defend the line of the Charente, and took up a position near Cognac. The Dukes of Anjou and Montpensier then advanced as far as Chateauneuf, with the intention of bringing them to battle; but the passage of the river was a difficulty which required some time to surmount, for the Huguenot army was in force on the other side, in the neighbourhood of the small town of Jarnac, and but one bridge existed over the Charente, which was of course insufficient for the object the Catholics had in view. The Protestant troops also, before the enemy reached the river, took the precaution of breaking down the bridge in two places;* and had the governor of Chateauneuf made a vigorous resistance, the scheme of the Duke of Anjou must have failed entirely. That place, however, was surrendered without striking a blow; and the Roman Catholic officers proceeded to construct a bridge of boats, and to prepare materials for filling up the gaps which had been effected in the old bridge.

Their intentions were now evident; and although the Duke of Anjou endeavored to conceal them by a demonstration upon Cognac,† the Admiral was not to be deceived. Leaving Jarnac to the Prince de Condé, as soon as he heard of the fall of Chateauneuf, Coligni marched with the advanced guard to Bassac,

* La Noue. † Castelnau. Aubigné.

in order to reconnoitre the forces of the enemy. A slight skirmish took place between his Protestants and a party of the Catholics who had passed the river; and the latter were forced to retreat in haste. The Admiral then, having made up his mind to dispute the passage of the Charente at that place, left two regiments of infantry and eight hundred horse, under Montgomery, Soubise and La Loue, to defend the bridge, and retired for the night, with the rest of the advanced guard, to Bassac. The Prince de Condé remained in Jarnac, at the distance of a league from the quarters of Coligni, while the light cavalry of the Admiral's division was posted at Triac, some miles from either of them. This arrangement was undoubtedly imprudent; but the perfect confidence which Coligni placed in the troops that he had left to guard the bridge, induced him to believe, he should receive intelligence of the first movements of the enemy, and be enabled himself to support the body thrown forward, before the Roman Catholics could make any impression upon it, while his own corps in turn would be supported by the forces of the Prince from Jarnac.

The obedience of the commanders left on the banks of the Charente was not such as the importance of the occasion required. Finding no shelter for themselves and their men, and scarcely any forage for the horses, they quitted the position, which they had been ordered by the Admiral to maintain; and, merely placing a party of fifty light horse to watch the passage during the night, about

half a mile from the bridge, they proceeded to seek other quarters and better accommodation.*

This act of disobedience was fatal to the Huguenot army. By the activity of Biron and Tavannes, the old bridge was repaired, in an incredibly short space of time, the bridge of boats was completed, and before daylight, the army of the Duke of Anjou began to pass the river; the cavalry and artillery filing over the old bridge, and the Swiss and French infantry over the bridge of boats. The whole operation was conducted by the Baron de Biron, mareschal-de-camp to the Duke of Anjou, with the utmost skill, care, and secrecy. No noise was made, no disorder took place; and the small guard of Protestants was not aware of any movement of the enemy's forces till the sun rose, and they perceived two-thirds of the royalist army in the meadows beside them, headed by a large body of men at arms, and the great blue standard of the Duke of Anjou.

The battle now began by a charge upon the Protestant light horse made by Martigues, who drove the handful before him, over a little rivulet. The alarm, however, was now given; troop after troop of the Huguenots hurried up; and the Admiral himself hastened towards the field. His object, was not to engage the enemy, who had already effected their purpose of passing the river, but to withdraw his forces in safety from the skirmish in

* La Noue.

which they were entangled, and to retreat slowly and in good order, with the hope that the large reinforcements, which were daily expected, would soon enable him and Condé to change a defensive into an offensive campaign.

The officers of the Duke of Anjou, however, pressed the Protestant troops so severely; and Montgomery, Acier, and Pluviaut, who were occupied in defending the hill above the Charente, and the neighbouring village, were so tardy in obeying the orders to retire, which they received, that nearly three hours were lost, during which time the whole rear-guard of the enemy passed the river; and the Admiral found that it was absolutely necessary to fight. Messengers were immediately sent to recall the Prince de Condé; who, according to the determination formed in the early part of the day, was already in retreat. In the meantime, a severe combat took place in the village of Triac, which was taken and retaken more than once; D'Andelot, one of the most impetuous, though one of the most skilful officers of the Protestant force, leading the charge in person against Martigues, one of the boldest and most enterprising of the Catholic party. The old days of chivalry seemed revived; generals and men fought hand to hand, and D'Andelot, in the very first shock, tore up the visor of his opponent, with his bridle hand, while he shot him through the head with his right. Coligni, at the head of a larger body, advanced to the support of his brother; but the Count de Brissac, followed by twelve hundred arquebu-

siers, forced the Admiral himself to retreat, and established himself in the village, which he barricaded. Fresh messengers were then despatched to hurry the advance of the main body of the Protestants; but Aubigné remarks that this main body only consisted of seven companies of men at arms, all the rest having been quartered at a distance to the left of the army, and knowing nothing of what was taking place.

Condé was not long, however, in obeying the call of his companions in arms, and advanced rapidly from the side of Jarnac, at the head of eight hundred horse. Sending on three of his principal officers with a small force towards Triac, he followed at full speed with his heavy cavalry. The party who preceded him, though but a handful in comparison with the multitude before them, without the slightest hesitation charged the advanced guard of the Duke of Montpensier, leaving on the left a body of three hundred of the enemy's horse, which immediately took them in flank. But at that moment, Condé appeared in the field, with his banner, bearing the words, "Danger is sweet for Christ and my country."

Just as he was taking his casque, however, he received a kick on the leg, from the horse of La Rochefoucault, by which it was broken. So terrible was the blow, that the bone protruded through his boot; but, pointing to his standard, he exclaimed, "Behold, ye true nobility of France, the moment which we have so much desired. Forward, to finish what our first charges have begun, and remember

the state in which Louis of Bourbon enters the fight for Christ and his country."*

With these words, he gave the order to charge, and at the head of his men, poured, to use the words of one who saw him, like thunder into the ranks of the enemy.† For a moment all gave way before him. The young Duke of Guise, and a company of men at arms with a large body of light horse, as well as a number of horse arquebusiers, were thrown into confusion, and driven back. The men at arms of Montsalis, and the regiment of the Duke of Nevers, were overthrown in an instant; and the regiments of Chavigny and Martigues completely routed, and forced in disarray upon those of the Duke of Montpensier, the Prince Dauphin, and two regiments of reiters.

Montpensier, however, his son, and the German cavalry, resisted the shock; and the main body, under the Duke of Anjou and the experienced officers who had been placed about his person, came up at full speed, and entirely surrounded the small force of Condé. Each man amongst the Protestants, fought as long as he was able, and twenty men at arms cut their way through, carrying with them the standard of the Prince. But Condé himself was destined to see no more fields. Wounded in the arm, and with his leg broken, his horse was at length killed, and he fell to the ground. His men still fought round him; at the head of whom appeared an old Protestant, named La Vergne, who, accompanied by twenty-five of his nephews, of whom fifteen were killed upon

* Aubigné. † Vie de Montpensier.

the spot and the rest taken prisoner, maintained the ground for some time, with about two hundred and fifty other gentlemen, though attacked on all sides by more than five thousand men. The whole of the little force of the Huguenots, in that part of the field, must inevitably have been put to the sword, had not Pluviaut come up with his arquebusiers, and under the fire which they kept up, enabled some to escape.* Unable either to fight or fly, Condé at length surrendered to a gentleman of the name of Argence. But shortly after, Montesquieu, captain of the guards to the Duke of Anjou, came up, and asking the name of Argence's prisoner, learned that it was the Prince de Condé; upon which, exclaiming, "Kill him, kill him," he put a pistol to his head and slew him on the spot.

"He took care to do so," says Brantome, "for it had been strongly recommended to several of the favorites of the Duke of Anjou, whom I know, on account of the hatred which he (the Duke) bore towards him, ever after the day I have mentioned."

The corpse was left where it fell, and the troops of the court pursued their victory, which was now complete; but Pluviaut and the Admiral retired with a firm face, gathering together the troops which had been scattered over the country in their retreat. Pluviaut, with his small body of arquebusiers, kept the whole Roman Catholic cavalry at bay, marching slowly and calmly towards Jarnac, where he fortunately met with the corps of Acier, consisting of

* Aubigné.

six thousand more arquebusiers; and then passing the river, he secured his rear by breaking down the bridge. He afterwards threw himself into Cognac, where he maintained his position some time, while the Admiral retired upon Sainctes; the Protestant army having suffered very much less in the battle than might have been expected from the circumstances under which it began.

Of course, the number of killed and wounded is differently recorded by the Protestant and Roman Catholic writers. On the one side, Aubigné computes the loss at a hundred and forty gentlemen killed upon the field; and on the other, Coustureau makes it amount to eight hundred. But it is evident that Aubigné has under-stated the consequences of this disastrous battle.

The corpse of the Prince de Condé was sought by the Duke of Anjou's orders, not from any movement of compassion, but merely to ascertain the fact of his death, which was at first doubted. "We had not gone far," says one of those who accompanied the Duke,* "when we perceived a great number of dead piled up in a heap, which made us judge that this was the spot where was the body of the Prince. In fact, we found it there, cast over an ass; and the Baron de Magnac having caused the beast to stop, took the corpse by the hair to lift up the face, which was turned towards the ground, and asked me if I recognized him; but on account of his having lost one eye, and being very much disfigured, I could

* Vie de Montpensier.

only reply that it was certainly his height and his complexion, but further I could not say."

The face of the unfortunate Prince was afterwards washed; and all doubts were then at an end; but nevertheless the body was afterwards indecently exposed upon a stone bench, in the gallery of the castle of Jarnac, where the Duke of Anjou took up his lodging for the night. There, too, the principal prisoners were brought before him; and the scene of butchery in cold blood, which usually followed an engagement during the third civil war, commenced, at the very door of the Prince's chamber. Stuart, who is supposed to have killed the Constable de Montmorenci, was stabbed by the friends of that great general, after a short conversation with the Duke. Chatelier was also killed; and La Noue himself, having been brought before the Duke of Montpensier, was told that his fate was sealed, and that he must prepare for death, but was afterwards spared at the intercession of Martigues.

No doubt can be entertained that great faults were committed by the Protestants in all the arrangements which preceded the battle of Jarnac. The different corps were so scattered, that they could not support each other; and even had the troops, placed to defend the passage of the river, done their duty, still much loss must have been sustained and much danger incurred, before Condé and Acier could arrive to the assistance of the Admiral. The error was remarked at the time by the young Prince of Bearn, who observed that it was folly to think of fighting an

united army, making an attack at one spot with forces so divided. "I said, long ago," he exclaimed, "that we were amusing ourselves too much with seeing plays at Niort, instead of gathering together our troops, as the enemy were concentrating theirs." La Noue points out the same mistake, and dismisses it with a few emphatic words: "Farther," he says, "it is to be remarked, that when armies have scattered quarters, they fall into perils, which the skill of the best chiefs cannot obviate."*

Nevertheless, although a fault was decidedly committed by the Protestant generals, and was moreover judiciously taken advantage of by the Roman Catholic commanders, though Condé was killed, and a number of the best officers either fell in the field, or became prisoners in the hands of the enemy, the result was by no means so disastrous as might have been anticipated; and the rejoicings at the French court soon came to an end. Even the loss of Condé proved, perhaps, rather beneficial to the Huguenot army than the contrary; for its operations were thenceforward conducted upon one regular plan, and the genius of the Admiral was enabled to display itself fully in its own peculiar line. Retreating upon Sainctes while Pluviaut remained at Cognac, and taking advantage of the rivers, all the passages of which he caused to be carefully guarded, Coligni placed his forces in security; and, as Aubigné

* La Noue, page 963.

expresses it, "saved the honor of the campaign,"* by keeping the field in the face of a victorious enemy.

In the meantime, the Duke of Anjou sent a herald to summon Cognac; and, receiving a haughty reply from Pluviaut, he marched to attack that town at the head of his army. He found it, however, defended by a body of twelve thousand foot, who had taken up a position in the park. On the approach of the Duke and his troops, Pluviaut, instead of waiting within the walls for the assault, caused some breaches, which already existed, to be enlarged, and threw out parties of a thousand at a time to skirmish with the enemy. The reception thus given to the Catholic forces was so fierce and determined, that, after the loss of two standards, the Duke of Anjou took advantage of the coming on of night to retire from Cognac, and directed his steps towards the strong town of Angoulême, which was then garrisoned by a part of the Huguenot army.

His hopes of surprising that place, in the consternation which he imagined the defeat of Jarnac would occasion amongst the Huguenots, were totally disappointed,† though the small town of Montaigu surrendered to the Catholic troops who were besieging it, upon the first intelligence of that battle. The fortress of Mucidan was also taken, but the siege of that place cost the life of Brissac, one of the best, but most sanguinary of the Duke's officers.‡

* Aubigné, liv. 5, cap. 9. † Aubigné.

‡ Coustureau.

The army of the court then paused inactive at Blanc, in Berri; although events, which I am about to detail, rendered it highly expedient that no means should be left untried to prevent the junction of the Protestant forces with a large body of auxiliaries, which were marching to their support from the banks of the Rhine. It is to be remarked, however, that the troops of the Duke of Anjou had suffered so severely from sickness and desertion, that the infantry had been reduced to one half, and the cavalry to one third, while the soldiers who remained were mutinous and discontented on account of their pay, which was several months in arrear.*

While the enemy was thus inactive, the greatest energy and determination were displayed in the Protestant camp; and the courage and confidence of the soldiery was raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by the conduct of the Queen of Navarre and her son. After measures had been taken by the Admiral for remedying the disaster at Jarnac, securing the quarters of his army, and strengthening the towns which had been garrisoned by the Huguenots, his head-quarters were fixed for a short time at Tonnay Charente;† and the Queen of Navarre, accompanied by the Prince of Bearn, and the young Prince de Condé, appeared before the forces assembled for review, and addressed them in

* Castelnau.

† A small town, about eight leagues from Saintes, on the road to Rochelle.

an animated harangue, taking an oath in their presence never to abandon the cause, and exacting from them the same engagement. She spoke at length of the loss of the Prince de Condé, and while she highly lauded his military virtues, and deplored his death, she pointed out that the troops had no occasion to be discouraged by that sad event, when they had so many commanders still left perfectly capable of supplying his place. She then presented to the army the Prince, her son, first leading him to the cavalry, and then to the infantry, solemnly dedicated him to the defence of the Reformed religion, declared him thenceforward the chief of the Protestant party, and expressed her conviction that he would soon display such qualities as would support it against the efforts of all those who had sworn its destruction. In the meantime, she said, they had an excellent general in the great Coligni; who, by his prudence, his valor, and his experience, had already caused himself to be looked upon as one of the greatest captains in Europe.

The assembled forces received their young chief with enthusiastic cries of exultation, all hearts feeling moved and elevated by the powerful eloquence of the extraordinary woman who addressed them;*

* Aubigné. Auvigny. As usual, Anquetil misstates the whole of this proceeding, representing the presentation of the Prince of Bearn to the army, as taking place at Cognac, immediately after the battle of Jarnac, and before the retreat of the Admiral upon Sainctes. Had he looked accurately at the historians of the time, he would have found, first, that the Admiral himself

and Henry having pledged himself in the most solemn manner to defend the Protestant religion, and maintain the common cause till full liberty of conscience was obtained, measures were taken for carrying on the war with vigor and profiting by the errors and inactivity of the enemy. To confirm the chiefs in their resolution, Jeanne d'Albret ordered a number of gold chains to be manufactured, from each of which was suspended a medal, bearing on one side her own name, with that of the Prince of Bearn, and on the other, the words, "Certain peace, complete victory, or honorable death." Many of these were distributed to the principal Protestant leaders, some being reserved for the commanders of the auxiliary force, which was by this time hastening to the assistance of the French Protestants, from the banks of the Rhine.

One of the most extraordinary marches recorded in history, is that which was undertaken by the army just mentioned, under the command of William Wolfang of Bavaria, Duke of Deux Ponts, or Zweibrucken. On being driven to re-commence the war, Condé, Coligni, and their companions, had applied eagerly to all the neighbouring princes favorable to their views, for aid in resisting the tyranny to

did not retreat upon Cognac at all, that place having been defended by Pluviaut; and secondly, that the Queen of Navarre did not join the army till after the retreat of the Duke of Anjou; and thirdly, that this famous review took place at Tonnay Charente, and not at Cognac.

which they were subjected; and the Prince of Orange was one of the first to take the field in their cause. His plans, however, had been frustrated, and a great part of his levies dispersed, before the battle of Jarnac, although a number of Protestant gentlemen, with two cornets of horse, and two thousand infantry, under the command of Genlis, had been despatched to his assistance.

With the French Huguenots, and a small body of Germans and Walloons, the Prince then hastened to join the Duke of Deux Ponts, who was assembling troops on the left bank of the Rhine; and undismayed by the prospect of having to traverse the whole of France, from Saverne to Sainctonge, through the midst of a hostile country defended by two considerable armies commanded by experienced officers, the Duke commenced his march as soon as the severity of the season would permit. On the part of the court, immense efforts were made to cut off the force under his command, which consisted of from five thousand to seven thousand five hundred reiters, and from four thousand to six thousand lanzknechts, with about eight hundred French cavalry, and seven hundred infantry of the same nation; his artillery amounting only to ten pieces of different sizes.*

The Duke of Aumale, stationed upon the frontier, was ordered to oppose the entrance of the

* I give the numbers both as they are stated by Castelnau and Aubigné. But it is to be remarked, that the Roman Catholic writer makes the amount less than the Protestant.

Germans into France at all risks, and to the army under his orders was speedily added another still more numerous, led by the Duke of Nemours.* To these were afterwards joined a force of two thousand foot, and two thousand five hundred horse, sent by the Duke of Alva to the assistance of the French court.† But a quarrel had taken place between the two French commanders; and instead of uniting for the purpose of opposing the Duke of Deux Ponts, Aumale and Nemours conducted all their operations with cold jealousy of each other; and the German forces advanced with a firm face into the heart of France, continually offering battle to the enemy's army, which, during seventeen days, marched side by side with their adversaries, without venturing to engage them. The numerous rivers which intersect that part of the country, were passed by the Duke of Deux Ponts with very little difficulty, till he reached the banks of the Loire, where, finding that the town of La Charité was but poorly garrisoned, he determined to besiege that important place; and having captured it after a slight resistance, he pursued his march without any further obstacle, although the army of the Duke of Anjou, sufficiently strong to give him battle, lay inactive between himself and the Huguenot camp. The indolence displayed by the Catholics upon this occasion is totally unaccounted for, and is the more extraordinary, as we find from undoubted authority, that the Duke of

* La Noue. † Castelnau.

Montpensier urged his cousin of Anjou in the strongest manner to oppose the junction of the German auxiliaries with the force under Coligni, and to offer battle to the Duke of Deux Ponts. He even so far took the responsibility upon himself, as to give this counsel under his hand. But his opinion was overruled, and the army of the court seemed to slumber till it was joined by the Dukes of Nemours and Aumale.*

By that time it was no longer possible to prevent the reiters and lanzknechts, who had effected so marvellous a march through France, from uniting with the French Huguenots; for the Duke of Deux Ponts had already reached the banks of the Vienne, which he passed at the ford of Verdamont, after a sharp skirmish with a considerable body of Roman Catholics.† He then advanced to the small town of Cars, where he halted, in the hope of throwing off a quartan fever, by which he had been afflicted during the whole of his course. The means he took, indeed, to free himself from this malady, were not such as were likely to produce that effect; and having drunk to excess, immediately after the fatigues of his march, he died on the 11th of June,‡

* Coustureau. † Aubigné.

‡ Le Laboureur. Aubigné, who places his death somewhat earlier, mentions the circumstance of his having aggravated the disease under which he suffered by excess in drinking, otherwise I might have rejected the tale as one of the Roman Catholic libels of the day, which were many.

1569. The glory he had acquired by the enterprise which he had accomplished, rendered his death a serious disadvantage to the Protestant party; but a still more severe loss had preceded that of the Duke of Deux Ponts by a few days.

D'Andelot, who had long been suffering, as we have before shewn, from intermittent fever, had been despatched shortly after the battle of Jarnac to repair some disasters which the Protestants had sustained in Poitou. Increasing illness, however, compelled him to abandon the attempt; and he retired to Sainctes, where, the disease having changed its character, he expired on the twenty-seventh of May, at the age of forty-eight, leaving a glorious name behind him, little less honored by the Papists than by the Huguenots. The Protestant party attributed his death to poison; but though the basest means were frequently employed at that time to effect the removal of a powerful adversary, the fact of his long previous illness, and the slow progress of the disease, which terminated his career, do not permit us to give any weight to a mere unsupported assertion.

The Duke of Deux Ponts was succeeded in command by the Count de Mansfeldt, and D'Andelot, by the famous Acier; and, on the other hand, the army of the court having been joined by the whole forces of the Catholic party in France, together with the Spanish and German auxiliaries, and a considerable body of Italian horse and foot sent by the Pope, took the field, and shewed some signs of activity.*

* Aubigné, Coustureau, Castelnau.

In the meanwhile, the Admiral, in the name of the Protestant party, addressed a memorial to the King, reciting the just causes of complaint which had induced the Protestants to take arms, beseeching him to grant his subjects entire liberty of conscience, and declarin that if the confession of faith, promulgated by the Reformed churches of France, could be shewn to be in any way repugnant to scripture, they were ready to yield to those who would teach them better. The King merely replied, that he would give ear to nothing till the Huguenots had returned to their duty;* and the armies proceeded to manœuvre for some days so close to each other, that a battle was expected hourly on both parts.

The Queen-mother, about this time, visited the head-quarters of the Prince her son, hoping, it would seem, by her presence and exhortations, to inspire the same degree of enthusiasm and zeal in the Roman Catholic soldiery, which had been produced amongst the Protestants, by the eloquence and devotion of the Queen of Navarre. In this, however, she was disappointed; and although the Cardinal of Lorraine, whom she had brought with her, —less with a view of benefiting by his counsels than of removing him from the neighbourhood of the young King, into whose mind he was basely endeavoring to instil a jealous hatred of the Duke of Anjou,†—eagerly urged the generals of the court to risk a decisive engagement; his advice was treated with contempt, by those who knew how greatly the

* Castelnau. † Memoires de Tavannes.

army was enfeebled both by sickness and desertion.* The proximity of the two armies, nevertheless, afforded many opportunities of attempting to force a battle, which the Admiral did not long neglect; and the Duke of Anjou having taken up a position at La Roche l'Abeille, and entrenched himself within strong barricades, Coligni determined to make a general reconnoissance, which might easily be turned into an attack, if the result of the first movement proved favorable. The regiment of Monsieur de Piles accordingly assailed the first barricades of the Roman Catholic army early in the morning; and having been repulsed by the forces under Strozzi, a relation of the Queen-mother, was supported by detachments from the advanced guard. A fierce skirmish ensued, in which the Catholics were driven back, their entrenchments carried, and Strozzi taken prisoner. The rain having extinguished the matches of the arquebusiers, the combat was decided by the sword, the lance, and the pike; but the cannon of the Duke of Anjou, placed upon a height, having opened a tremendous fire upon the Protestant regiments as they moved forward, Coligni at length desisted from his attempt upon a position naturally strong and carefully fortified; and recalling his detachments, he retired slowly, notwithstanding the advantages which he had gained. The loss on the Protestant side was scarcely worthy of notice, while that on the part of the Roman Catholics amounted

* Castelnau.

to from four to eight hundred men, besides thirty-two officers.* This slaughter was occasioned by the determined resistance of Strozzi and his forces; but, in thus sacrificing themselves, they saved the army of the Duke of Anjou, whose artillery must inevitably have been taken, had the barricades been carried at an earlier period of the day.†

The two armies then separated, and, to use the words of one who accompanied the forces of the Duke of Anjou, "the Catholics did nothing but temporize, and go hither and thither, till, towards the middle of July, they proceeded to Beaulieu, near Loches." Both parties, indeed, found it impossible to maintain themselves in the Limousin, on account of the total want of food for the soldiers and forage for the horses. The Protestants kept the field, however, and six small towns were taken by them in a few weeks. Chatellerault was also surprised; and the gallant defence of Niort, which was attacked by the Count de Lude, at the head of a considerable force, brought fresh renown to Pluviaut, who cut his way through the besieging army with a small body of determined men; and, notwithstanding the existence of two practicable breaches, the animosity of the inhabitants, and the repeated attempts to

* Castelnau computes the loss of his own party at about four hundred, while Aubigné makes it amount to from seven to eight hundred. La Noue says, that twenty-two officers only fell on the part of the Roman Catholics.

† La Noue.

storm made by a gallant and persevering enemy, defended the city, till the approach of a fresh corps of Protestants compelled the Count to raise the siege.

The Duke of Anjou, finding that the desertions in his army still continued, and seeing no possibility of keeping it together without money and repose, suffered the principal noblemen, who accompanied him, to retire, towards the end of the month, for the purpose of refreshing their men, and distributed the rest of his forces to different towns ;* proceeding himself to join his brother, the young King, at Amboise, whence the court advanced to Tours, and spent several weeks in inactivity. Coligni, however, knowing well, that energy and action are the soul of a revolt, determined to lead his troops to fresh conquests, in a more productive and less exhausted province. According to the account of La Noue, the plan which he laid out for the campaign during the rest of the summer and the autumn, and from which he unfortunately deviated, was, to attack St. Maixant, Lusignan, and Mirebeau, in order to open the way to the siege of Saumur, a town, the possession of which was of great importance to the Huguenots, from the passage across the Loire which it afforded. The design of the Admiral was then to strengthen the fortifications of Saumur ; and, leaving a strong garrison in the place, to march towards Paris, for the purpose, if possible, of driving the court into negotiations for a more stable peace than had yet

* Aubigné. Castelnau.

been obtained.* Part only of this plan was executed; for while Montgomery carried on the war successfully in Bearn, and gathered together a considerable army in that quarter, Coligni, after having taken the town of Lusignan by assault,† and suffered the citadel to capitulate, was persuaded, by the opinion of the majority of his council, to direct his efforts against Poitiers itself,‡ although that large and important place was known to be already provided with an ample garrison; and that the Duke of Guise, accompanied by his brother the Duke of Mayenne, and twelve hundred choice soldiers, had with, or against, the consent of the Duke of Anjou,§ thrown themselves into the city, bent upon defending it to the last. The vast extent of the town, which covers more ground than many places containing a population of treble the number which it possesses, the weakness of its walls, and the commanding points for placing artillery, afforded by the rocky heights which are found on three sides, as well as the eager solicitations of the people of Poitou, were plausible inducements to undertake the siege.

* La Noue, page 973. † Aubigné. ‡ La Noue.

§ Castelnau declares that the Duke of Guise was sent by the Duke of Anjou; but Coustureau, who was with the army, says, that while they were at Loches, "the news came that Monsieur de Guise, and a part of the Italian cavalry which had gone to the side of Niort, previous to the siege by the Count de Lude, had been obliged to throw themselves into Poitiers, and were there besieged, which they judged, at that time, very wrong of the said Duke of Guise."

But the better judgment of Coligni was against it; and even after the attack had commenced, he once more assembled the council, and represented the danger which they incurred of seeing the army melt away in the long operations before them. The opinion of the leaders, however, remained unchanged; and although some high grounds in the city and suburbs, rising platform above platform, afforded advantages to the garrison, the weakness of the place was too tempting to be resisted by the Protestants. Indeed, so indefensible did it seem, that La Noue declares, that, but for the river, which takes a circuit round part of the town, he "would rather be on the outside, with four thousand men to attack it, than within the walls, with four thousand to defend it;"* and the terror of the inhabitants was so great, that it was not till the young Duke of Guise, Monsieur de Ruffec, and others, had made a display of the whole forces of the place, consisting of six thousand foot, and fourteen hundred lances, that they abandoned the idea of immediate capitulation.†

The siege began on the twenty-fourth of July; and the suburb of St. Ladre was speedily taken by Monsieur de Piles, but as soon retaken by the Duke of Guise; who maintained his position therein till the houses, between himself and the wall, were, by his orders, burned down behind him.

In artillery, the Protestant army was sadly de-

* La Noue, page 977. † Aubigné.

ficient, having only thirteen large cannon, and a few culverins; but these being placed upon the rocks,* at four hundred paces' distance, and the whole of the town being exposed to their fire, great damage was done, and several breaches were shortly effected. The vigor and determination of the garrison, however, created new obstacles to the progress of the Protestant army, as fast as the defences were battered down; and the Duke of Guise, as well as the Count de Lude, who had retired into the city, distinguished themselves as much by their incessant activity, as by the constant exposure of their own persons to all the labors and dangers of the time. A bridge was destroyed which the Protestants had constructed, in order to pass the river; and although they gained the breach on the side of St. Sournin, and lodged themselves there, the garrison flooded a part of the meadow on the other side, by stopping the course of the river farther down. They likewise constructed fresh works across the open ground, in rear of the breach, behind which they assembled a large body of horse; while the Huguenots prepared to support the storming parties by men-at-arms; so that the extraordinary sight was seen of cavalry employed on both sides in the actual assault and defence of the wall.

We find, too, that the principal commanders in the place, in order to strengthen the resolution of the inhabitants, had brought their wives and

* Castelnau. Aubigné.

daughters with them; so that the defenders of the breach of St. Sournin were encouraged by the sight of a troop of seventy-five ladies, who, mounted on horseback, formed a line behind the soldiery, but within shot both of the artillery and small arms of the assailants.*

On sounding the canal, previous to the meditated attack, the depth was found too great for the forces to pass, and though means were taken to draw off the water, they proved unsuccessful. Efforts were subsequently made against other points; and the siege of Poitiers had continued nearly six weeks, when intelligence reached the head-quarters of Coligni, that the Duke of Anjou, having gathered together a body of twelve thousand men, had marched against Chatellerault, a place of sufficient importance to justify the Admiral in abandoning the enterprise in which he was engaged, to march to its deliverance. Indeed, La Noue† intimates that Coligni was not a little glad of a fair excuse for raising the siege of Poitiers, which was undertaken against his judgment, and in which his army had wasted away to about one half of its original number.

The attack upon Chatellerault, proved as unsuccessful against the town as that upon Poitiers, though, as a demonstration, it produced the desired effect by calling the Huguenot forces from before the walls of the latter place. In an attempt to storm, the troops of the Pope, having obtained the honor of leading the attack, were received by the

* Aubigné.

† La Noue, page 979.

garrison, to use the words of La Noue, "according to the affection which the Protestants bore to their master." They were repulsed with great slaughter; and the rapid march of the Admiral obliged the Duke of Anjou to retire, not without great difficulty and danger.* Finding his army equal in number to the Catholic forces, which had taken up a position at Celle, Coligni passed the Creuse, and endeavored, by constant skirmishes, to bring the Duke of Anjou to battle; but that Prince had fortified his camp so strongly, that the Huguenots could not attack him, except under very disadvantageous circumstances; and after having, in vain, attempted to draw him from his entrenchments, the Admiral repassed the Creuse and the Vienne, in order to refresh his troops at a place called Faye la Vineuse.

While halting at this spot, a well merited punishment was inflicted upon an assassin, who having attempted the life of Coligni, was discovered, convicted, and executed. A reward of fifty thousand crowns of gold had been offered by the parliament of Paris, on the 13th of September, to any one who should deliver the Admiral into the hands of the King, and the words "dead or alive" were subsequently added;† a temptation to murder, which

* Castelnau, liv. 7.

† Aubigné. Castelnau. Journal de Bruslart. We find from the latter authority, that the first decree of the parliament only offered the reward of fifty thousand crowns to those who should deliver the Admiral up to justice. But by the express orders of the King, the words, "dead or alive," were subsequently added.

was not without effect, as almost immediately after the publication of the decree, one of Coligni's servants, named, by the French, Dominique d'Albe, was found to undertake the task.

During a halt of five or six days at Celle, and eight at Chinon,* the army of the Duke of Anjou was reinforced by considerable bodies of troops, from different parts of the country, by a party of the gallant defenders of Poitiers, led by the Duke of Guise, and by six thousand Swiss under Pfifer. Finding that he could now bring into the field, seven thousand horse and eighteen thousand foot, the Duke determined to march in pursuit of the enemy, in order to seek the battle which he had so lately avoided.† It was now the policy of Coligni to decline an engagement, till he could be rejoined by the forces of Montgomery, who was hastening to his aid from Bearn, after having performed some of the most brilliant exploits which occurred during the war and recovered from the hands of the Catholics the whole territory of the Queen of Navarre. The Protestants, however, were detained several days at Faye, by the want of horses for the artillery;‡ all the beasts of draught which they possessed having been sent with their battering train to Lusignan, and not having yet returned. As soon as they made their appearance, the Admiral marched towards Moncontour; but the Duke of Anjou followed him with such rapidity, that on the thirtieth of September, the advanced guard of the Roman

* Vie de Montpensier. † Castelnau. ‡ La Noue.

Catholics came up with the rear of the Huguenots near St. Clair, after Coligni and the main body had passed the small river which runs between that village and Moncontour. A sharp skirmish took place the same night, and the small corps of Protestants, which had not yet crossed the stream, was thrown into confusion, and suffered severely, by the sudden charge of the Papists, whom they did not know to be so near. The Admiral, however, hastening to their aid, rallied the fugitives; and the whole force having passed, took up a position on the other side of the river, in battle array, waiting the expected attack of the enemy. But the danger of attempting a narrow ford in the presence of an adverse army, deterred the Duke of Anjou from following up his advantage; and he contented himself with pouring a destructive fire of artillery into the Huguenot ranks. Coligni remained in the field till nightfall, and then, under favor of the darkness, pursued his way to Moncontour.*

At that place a mutiny broke out among the German troops in the Protestant camp, the Admiral having no funds at command to furnish even a part of their pay, which was long in arrear. A number of gentlemen also demanded leave to return to their homes, from which they had now been absent many months; and much dissension existed in the council, with regard to the future proceedings of the army, every one thinking himself entitled to attention, and but few shewing any disposition to obey. To obviate

* La Noue.

the evils, which were sure to spring from such a state of things, Coligni despatched messengers to call the young Prince of Bearn, and his cousin, the Prince de Condé, from Parthenay, where they then were; but they only arrived to witness the defeat of the Protestants at Moncontour.

While these events were taking place at the head-quarters of the Huguenots, the Catholic forces passed the small river Dive, near its source, and stretching out towards the plain of Assay, cut off the enemy from Lower Poitou. At the same time, the Duke of Anjou detached a small body of cavalry to Ervaut, to oppose the passage of the Toue at that point; thus hemming in the army of the Admiral, and apparently leaving him no means of retreat, in case of disaster. But Coligni was too wise to suffer himself to be so entrapped; and gave orders for securing the passes of a marsh called the Pas de Jeu, which precaution proved highly favorable after his defeat.*

On the evening before the battle, the forces of the Duke advanced upon Moncontour, apparently with the intention of attacking the enemy in that small town; and a skirmish took place, which was carried on but languidly on the part of the Roman Catholics, who found that Coligni's position was too strong to be carried, even by superior numbers.† During the night, two gentlemen from the royal army approached the Protestant outposts, and having obtained a parley, sent a message to Coligni, warning

* Castelnau. † La Noue.

him to avoid a battle. "Gentlemen," they said, addressing some of the Huguenot officers, "we bear the signs of enemies, but we have no animosity against you or your party. Pray caution the Admiral against fighting, for our army is marvellously strong, having been greatly reinforced, and is also very determined. Let him only gain one month's time; for all our nobility have vowed and informed the Duke, that they will not remain with him longer; but that if he employs them within that space, they will do their duty well."*

They added more intimations to the same effect; but Coligni, though, it would seem, he believed the warning to be sincere, was prevented from taking advantage of it, by the opposition of his council, the majority of the members maintaining, that it would discourage the soldiers to retreat by night, as the more prudent were inclined to do; and the march was accordingly put off till daybreak. At dawn, however, the lanzknechts, and a part of the reiters, refused to move without payment; and an hour and a half was lost in appeasing them, which delay proved the ruin of the Protestant army; for, before the forces of Coligni had advanced a quarter of a league, the van of the Catholics was descried, and nothing remained but to prepare for battle. To shelter his men from the superior artillery of the enemy,

* There is some difference between La Noue and Aubigné in regard to this transaction; but it is not of much importance, as both state the fact without any material variation, though they do not agree as to the day on which the communication was made.

Coligni took up his position in a hollow ground,* with the Dive upon his left, and the Toue upon his right. He himself led the advanced guard, with Count Wolrath of Mansfeldt at the head of the reserve, and Count Louis of Nassau in command of the main body.

The Roman Catholic van was, as usual, under the orders of the Duke of Montpensier, accompanied by his son, and Martigues, the Rhinegrave, and twelve cornets of German cavalry, together with several thousand Swiss infantry and the Papal forces. The main body was led by the Duke of Anjou, assisted by Tavannes and the most experienced French commanders; having Count Ernest of Mansfield on the one hand, and the Marquis of Baden covering the other flank with a thousand German cavalry. The infantry of this division was composed of tried corps of Swiss, Walloons, Spaniards, and Italians, several French regiments, and seven pieces of artillery. The Duke of Guise, with La Valette, and a strong force of cavalry, formed a detached body upon the left; and Biron commanded the reserve.†

In both armies much anxiety was felt for the safety of the Princes who were in the field; and the Catholics took the precaution of placing a body

* La Noue.

† It is very difficult to discover the exact position of the various corps on this occasion, as there exist many discrepancies in the accounts furnished by Aubigné and La Noue on the one hand, and Castelnau and Coustureau on the other. Thus Castelnau says that the Duke of Guise was with the advanced guard.

of fifty chosen gentlemen, with their persons and their horses armed at all points, as a sort of barrier before the Duke of Anjou; while the Protestants, after some consultation, determined to send the young Prince of Bearn, and his cousin, to such a distance from the battle, as to place them out of danger. Henry yielded to this decision with tears of indignation; and, accompanied by a small escort, retired a short space from the army, to a spot whence he could watch the course of the engagement.

The battle commenced by a furious charge, led by Martigues; while the Duke of Anjou extended his left to outflank the Huguenot forces, and shelter his own from their fire,* which, from the well chosen position of the artillery, proved very destructive to the Catholics.† A corresponding movement to the right was immediately made by Coligni; but in the meantime the Duke of Guise, La Valette, the Italian cavalry, and two thousand arquebusiers poured down upon the advanced guard of the Huguenots, where they were encountered by Mouy and a body of French and German horse. The latter fled‡ at once, and the troops of Mouy gave way, but were instantly supported by the regiments of Renel and Autricourt, with a gallant charge, in which Autricourt was killed. The Catholic cavalry, however, still gained ground; and the Admiral, seeing the necessity of a great effort, put himself at the head of three French regiments, and having ordered his arquebusiers to fire only at the horses, advanced against the enemy,

* Aubigné. † Castelnau. ‡ Aubigné.

sending to Count Louis of Nassau for a reinforcement of three troops of reiters from the main body.*

The error was now committed which probably decided the fate of the battle. Count Louis, instead of despatching the force required, under an inferior commander, led it himself to the assistance of the Admiral; and a charge took place, in which the Rhinegrave and Coligni met hand to hand, thirty paces before their respective corps. The Rhinegrave fired a pistol straight at the head of the Admiral, wounding him severely in the face; but Coligni, almost at the same moment, shot him dead upon the spot,† and then endeavored to lead his men on, to complete the rout of the Catholic advanced guard, which was already in confusion. The great flow of blood, however, from the wound he had received, nearly suffocated him, and he was compelled, unwillingly, to retire from the field.

Count Louis, in the mean time, brought up the Protestant cavalry successfully against the enemy. The Count of Mansfeldt supported him by a gallant charge. The Duke of Anjou in vain attempted to regain the advantage, by moving up with the main body of his army. The Marquis of Baden was slain, the Duke of Aumale surrounded and nearly taken, the Prince's own horse killed under him, and the Catholic cavalry routed and in confusion; while Count Louis of Nassau, and the Count of Mansfeldt were still advancing.‡ But the centre of the Pro-

* Aubigné, La Noue, Castelnau. † Aubigné. ‡ Castelnau.

testant army was without a leader. Count Louis was too far engaged to return to take the command; and one of the regiments of lanzknechts raised their pikes, and refused to fight.* Had the main body of the Huguenots moved up at that moment, to support its advanced-guard and reserve, the victory was won. But it did not stir; and the young Prince of Bearn, watching the combat from the high ground, exclaimed, with rage and indignation, "We lose our advantage, and with it the battle!"†

Profiting by this unexpected piece of good fortune, Tavannes and Biron hastened to rally the cavalry behind the advancing rear-guard of the royal army. Marshal Cossé, at the head of the Swiss, came up at double quick time; the Protestant forces in turn gave way, the mutinous lanzknechts were broken, and, notwithstanding all the efforts of Count Louis, the Count of Mansfeldt, and Coligni himself, who had by this time returned to the field, the rout soon became complete. The lanzknechts threw down their arms before the Swiss; but they met with little mercy; and of the whole of the German infantry, amounting to upwards of four thousand, scarce five hundred were left alive.‡

The forces of the Huguenots fled towards Ervaut; which, owing to the precautions previously taken by the Admiral, and the skill and gallantry of Count Louis of Nassau, they reached with less loss than might have been expected.§ The latter nobleman retired delibe-

* Aubigné. † Cayet. ‡ Castelnau. § La Noue. Aubigné.

rately, with a considerable body of horse, keeping within three or four hundred paces of the Catholic cavalry; and whenever he found himself pressed by their advance, wheeling and charging them with a degree of determination, which checked their progress, and saved the rest of the Protestant army.

The slaughter was, nevertheless, very severe amongst the insurgents. The lowest number given by any contemporary, is five thousand five hundred foot, and two hundred and fifty horse, with the artillery and a number of standards. On the part of the Catholics, Aubigné declares, that not more than two hundred of the infantry, and four hundred of the cavalry fell in the engagement; but Castelnau, who, being with the Duke of Anjou, had a better opportunity of ascertaining the facts, makes the loss on his side to amount to five hundred horse, amongst whom were some of the principal personages in the army of the court.* The same cold-blooded acts of slaughter, which had disgraced the wars of religion from the commencement, took place after the battle; and La Noue, who had been made prisoner, as well as Acier, was only saved from death, at the express command of the Duke of Anjou.

Thus ended the battle of Moncontour, which occurred on the third of October, 1569; an event well calculated to destroy all hope in the

* It is curious to remark, that the Protestant Aubigné makes the loss of the Protestants more severe, and that of the Catholics less so than Castelnau.

breasts of the Protestants, and to render the Catholics more rigid in their intolerance; but the wisdom and resolution of Coligni, and the errors and vacillation of the Duke of Anjou, deprived the one party of the fruits of their victory, and saved the other from the consequences of defeat.

From Ervaut, the Huguenot forces which could be gathered together, pursued their retreat to Parthenay, where the Admiral and his principal counsellors, passed the night in writing despatches to all friendly powers, beseeching speedy aid to remedy the disaster which had just taken place.* They then hurried on to Niort, where they were met by the Queen of Navarre, whom no reverses could discourage, and whose presence greatly tended to restore confidence to the dismayed soldiery.

Thence, continuing his course towards Guienne, but taking care to throw garrisons into the principal towns that he passed, Coligni sheltered the remains of his army behind the Dordogne, and, after a short halt, marched on to unite his forces with the victorious troops of Montgomery, which he effected at Aiguillon.

While the defeated party thus took prudent measures for its own security, the victors wasted their time in petty sieges. Niort was captured without resistance: the gallant Mouy, to whom the defence of the place had been entrusted, having been assassinated and the town abandoned by the garrison. A number of other cities and fortresses surrendered;

* Aubigné.

and Lusignan, after a short siege, was suffered to capitulate.

At Niort, the Duke of Anjou, having been joined by the Queen-mother and the Cardinal of Lorraine, held a council to decide upon his future proceedings; and although the more experienced officers in the camp, urged the necessity of pursuing the dispirited army of Coligni,—which advice, had it been followed, would probably have led to the total destruction of that force,—it was determined to besiege the small town of St. Jean d'Angeli; which enterprise proved as disastrous to the Catholics, as the siege of Poitiers had been found by the Protestant party.* The town was gallantly defended by Monsieur de Piles; and although its strength was not remarkable, and the arrival of the young King in the camp gave additional vigor to the attacking party, every attempt to storm was repulsed with severe loss to the besiegers; and the Roman Catholic troops were gradually wasted away by sickness and the sword.

During several weeks, de Piles refused to listen to the terms of capitulation offered; but the Baron de Biron having, at length, proposed a negotiation for a general peace, the Protestant commander immediately agreed to treat; and deputies were despatched to the army of the Princes—as the force under Coligni was called—while a suspension of arms during ten days was stipulated for at St. Jean d'Angeli;

* La Noue. Aubigné.

which place was to be surrendered if not succored before the expiration of the truce. A party of troops, however, from Angouleme, forced their way in, to the aid of de Piles; and the siege was recommenced with greater vigor than before.

It was not till he had set the enemy at defiance during seven weeks, and had seen the defences of the town totally demolished, that the bold commander who defended St. Jean, agreed to accept a capitulation, which secured to him the liberty of marching out with arms and baggage, upon the condition of not taking any active share in the war during four months.* The loss of the Catholics in this siege was tremendous; and the death of Martigues deprived the King of one of his best officers.

Various negotiations followed the surrender of St. Jean, and proposals were made and rejected on both parts; while frequent skirmishes took place, in which, generally speaking, success was on the side of the Protestants. In the mean time, the army of the Princes increased, to use the expression of La Noue, "like a snow-ball," gathering every where fresh troops; and the fatigues and reverses which it had undergone, were forgotten during a long period of repose in the rich Agenois.

No sooner was the winter over, than Coligni, accompanied by young Henry of Navarre, the Prince de Condé, Count Louis of Nassau, and the Count de Montgomery, once more took the field, and exe-

* Aubigné, Castelnau.

cuted an enterprise, scarcely less difficult and extraordinary than that which had been performed by the Duke of Deux Ponts. Numerous Protestant noblemen, at the head of small bodies of men, were at that time scattered over the face of Languedoc and Dauphiné; and on the frontiers of Germany a considerable corps was collecting for the support of the Huguenots, under the Prince of Orange, and the Count Palatine. To gather all the isolated parties of his own faith, dispersed through the south of France, into the great mass of his forces, and with them to join the German auxiliaries and march upon Paris, was now the design entertained by the Admiral;* but his advance was delayed for some time, and his scheme nearly frustrated, by a severe illness which attacked him at St. Etienne, where, during several days, his state was considered desperate.†

To the joy of all, however, he recovered; and after having passed through part of Roussillon, and made a circuit round three sides of France, the Protestant army approached René le Duc, where the royal forces, under Marshal Cossé, appeared to oppose its farther progress. A severe skirmish ensued between the two corps; each occupying a position on a steep ridge of hills opposite to the other, with a narrow valley and some meadows, intersected by streams, between them. This short and desultory combat is only remarkable as the first occasion on which the young Prince of Bearn was permitted to take part in the engagement. In this instance, as at Mon-

* Castelnau. † La Noue.

contour, an effort was made to induce Henry to view the struggle from a distance, but he was now resolved to share in the dangers and honors of the field; and Count Louis of Nassau yielded to him the command of the advanced guard.* The action never became general; but the advantage was decidedly on the part of the Admiral, who obtained the object he desired, and forced his way on to the Loire, according to his original plan.†

At La Charité, which was in the hands of the Huguenots, Coligni halted to prepare artillery, of which his army had hitherto been totally destitute, threatening to march direct on to Paris, if the treaty, which was then under consideration, should not be concluded.‡

But the Queen-mother had by this time learned, that no hope existed of subduing the insurgents by force of arms; and there can be little doubt that she had, by this time, taken that dreadful determination, the execution of which, stained her name with the darkest crime that has ever blackened the history of the world. The treaty was accordingly signed at St. Germain, on the second of August, 1570, to the great satisfaction of the wise and good of the two great parties, which were now equally exhausted by a long and sanguinary war, equally destitute of money to pay the mercenary troops engaged on both sides, equally unsuccessful in the attainment of the objects they had proposed to themselves, and equally horrified at the excesses which they could

* Aubigné. † La Noue. ‡ Castelnau.

not repress amongst their own partisans, and the miseries inflicted upon France by all.

The peace now concluded, assured to the Protestants full liberty of conscience, a general amnesty, the restitution of confiscated estates, the enjoyment of all their offices and employments, the right of challenging a certain number of judges, the open exercise of their religious rites in the suburbs of two towns in each province, and as a security, the possession for two years, of four towns, Rochelle, Montauban, Cognac, and La Charité. With these concessions the Protestant party were entirely satisfied; and although experience of past deceit, rendered them still doubtful of the sincerity of the court, Coligni declared more than once, after the treaty was signed, that he would rather die, than see France fall back into the state of anarchy and crime which had been produced by the third religious war.

BOOK IV.

THE most dark and doubtful period of French history, that in which the most consummmate art was employed by the actors to conceal the motives and course of their proceedings, and on which party spirit and religious zeal, have since labored the most skilfully and energetically to obscure the facts, lies between the signature of the peace of 1570 and the infamous massacre of St. Bartholomew's day. The darkness, however, the fraud, and the crime, are all on the side of the Roman Catholics. The accusations which were levelled against the Protestants, as soon as the act was perpetrated, to justify an unjustifiable deed, have all been swept away; and their conduct appears clear, open, candid, and only too confiding in a party whose professions they had often tried, and ever found insincere, whose promises had uniformly been violated, who gloried in the breach of all faith with religious opponents, and maintained that no oath was binding on a monarch towards his subjects.*

This rash confidence, however, did not arise for some time after the conclusion of the treaty of St. Germain, and was only produced by the most

* Memoires de Castelnau. La Laboureur. Brantome

artful devices of their enemies. None of the principal leaders of the Huguenots appeared at the court; and Charles IX. and his mother, found that the memory of former infidelity was not easily to be obliterated. The young Prince of Navarre, who was governor of Guienne, retired for a short time into that province, and visited some part of his hereditary dominions,* while Coligni, Count Louis of Nassau, and other celebrated commanders, assembled at Rochelle, or remained at their estates in the country. The towns left at the disposal of the Huguenots were strictly guarded, although the German auxiliaries were dismissed, and everything indicated that not much reliance was placed on the engagements of the court.

After a short tour through Guienne and Bearn, Henry of Bourbon returned to Rochelle, and remained in that town with his mother, during the winter of 1570-71; while on the part of Charles IX. and Catherine de Medicis, nothing was left undone to reassure the Huguenots, and to convince them, that, tired of civil contentions, the King and his council were determined rigidly to enforce the treaty in their favor. All was smooth and plausible in the aspect of the court; the marriage of the young King with Elizabeth of Austria, daughter of the emperor Maximilian II, gave occasion for great rejoicings; and peace, tranquillity, joy and amusement, seemed to have succeeded to the din of arms,

* Sully. Perefixe.

and the virulence of political strife. All animosity on the side of the Roman Catholics, it is true, did not entirely disappear; and the fact of some individuals still retaining their angry and vindictive feelings, and displaying them openly, served as a strong contrast to the conduct of Catherine and her son, and tended, more than even the demeanor of the King, to lull the Huguenots into a fatal security. The Duke of Montpensier refused to sign the treaty of peace,* and retired to his estates discontented with the concessions made to the Reformers. The Papists of Rouen and Dieppe tumultuously resisted the execution of the edict, and pillaged and slaughtered the Protestants assembled for religious purposes. A three days' massacre took place at Orange; and various other outrages were perpetrated in different parts of the country.

The Protestant leaders remonstrated now as on former occasions, but they were no longer met by cold and unmeaning excuses, or haughty rejection of their just demands. The King and his mother professed the most lively interest in their affairs; and the offenders at Rouen and Dieppe were severely punished by Marshal Montmorenci and the President de Morsan. A revolt, too, which took place in Paris, on the removal of a mark of ignominy from the spot where some houses belonging to Huguenots, executed during the preceding troubles, had stood, was instantly repressed.† Charles him-

* Aubignè. Sully. † Ibid.

self was accustomed to call the treaty which he had signed, "My peace," and insinuated to the Protestant leaders, that he had anxiously labored for it, in order to draw round him the Princes of the blood, as a support against the enormous power and pretensions of the House of Guise.*

As the Huguenot leaders, however, still remained assembled at Rochelle, Marshal Cossé was despatched to that city to confer with, and endeavor to lure them, to the court. He was instructed to remonstrate mildly on the unnecessary alarm they displayed, and to renew the proposal, which had been previously made, of drawing the bonds between the houses of Navarre and Valois closer together, by the marriage of Henry of Bourbon with Marguerite, the youngest sister of the French King, a princess beautiful, graceful and accomplished, but educated in a school, where morality was of no account, and even decency but little prized.

Doubts still lingered in the mind of the Queen of Navarre; and she did not receive these overtures with so much alacrity as the court probably expected. She suggested difficulties as to the form of marriage, between two persons of different religions, and shewed herself more inclined to throw impediments in the way than to forward the alliance. But such objections were overruled by Charles, who had already spoken with the Papal legate on the subject; and about the same time the monarch's full consent was given to the union of

* Sully.

the young Prince de Condé, with the beautiful Mary of Cleves, a lady allied to the houses of Nevers and Guise, but who had been brought up by the Queen of Navarre in the Protestant faith.*

A third marriage was proposed and effected between Coligni himself, who had been for some years a widower, and Jacqueline d'Entremont, the proprietor of very large estates in Savoy. In regard to this union, a degree of romantic enthusiasm was displayed by the bride, which deserves mention here. The reputation of the Admiral had excited the admiration of the Lady, to so high a point, that trusting to the weight of her vast possessions, she ventured upon making the first overtures herself.† They were received with pleasure by Coligni, who immediately sent one of his friends to express his gratitude; and the young King of France shewed every desire to facilitate the views of both; but Philibert Emanuel, Duke of Savoy, resisted all efforts to obtain his consent, and Jacqueline d'Entremont, seeing that his determination was not to be shaken, made her escape from Savoy, resolved, as she said, before she died, to obtain the name of Cato's Marcia.‡ She reached Rochelle in safety, and was married shortly after to the object of her enthusiastic attachment. Coligini, on the same day, gave the hand of his daughter to his friend Teligny, whom he himself had educated in principles, which, in the eyes of that wise and great man, were more

* Aubigne. † Auvigny. ‡ Aubigné.

than a compensation for the want of high rank and great possessions.*

An event occurred, however, almost immediately after this double marriage, which cast a gloom over the party at Rochelle, and might have reawakened all the suspicions of the Huguenots, had not other circumstances tended strongly to increase their confidence in the sincerity of the King and his mother. The brother of the Admiral, Odet de Chatillon, commonly called the Cardinal de Chatillon, died at Southampton, on his way back from the court of Elizabeth; and rumor, it would appear with too much cause, attributed his death to poison.† The Prince de Porcian had some years before undergone the same fate;‡ and the assassination of Mouy, the attempt upon the life of the Admiral at the instigation of La Riviere, captain of the Duke of Anjou's guards,§ and a number of other crimes, equally atrocious, afforded sufficient evidence, that no means were considered too black and horrible to be employed, when the object was to free the court from a dangerous enemy.

* Brantome.

† Anquetil himself acknowledges the justice of this report, though Aubigné does not mention the fact.

‡ The legend of D. Claud de Guise a bitter satire, upon which but little reliance can be placed, attributes the greater part of the murders by poison, which took place at this time, to a personage called St. Bartholomew, a creature of D. Claud, who was himself suspected of innumerable crimes.

§ The assassin before his death, made full confession of the deed, and named the instigator.

With such examples before him, it is probable that neither the professions of the young monarch, nor the caresses which were showered upon the Protestant leaders, would have blinded the eyes of the Admiral, had not various circumstances, totally independent of the demeanor of the Royal family towards the Huguenots, tended to shew that Charles was most anxious to detach himself from those whom Coligni knew to be the implacable enemies of his house, and the instigators of all the persecution, which the professors of the Reformed religion had undergone. The young Duke of Guise had conceived the daring expectation of obtaining the hand of the King's sister Marguerite; and his uncle the Cardinal of Lorraine had, in insolent terms, declared to the Portuguese ambassador that his purpose should be accomplished.* But Charles had angrily rejected a proposal, which he considered insulting to his sister; and had, more than once, expressed himself with furious indignation, at the ambition of the aspirant. On one occasion, we find, that he even suggested to some of his companions the assassination of the young Duke;† and while it was evident to all that the house of Lorraine had lost its influence over the French monarch, the family of Montmorenci, closely allied to that of Chatillon and preserving friendly feelings towards it notwithstanding all the painful events of the civil war, was daily rising in the favor of the King.

There was reason also to suppose, that the autho-

* Brantome. † P. Matthieu.

rity, which the Queen-mother had exercised over the actions of Charles, had become wearisome to him; and it was well known, that the opinion of her friends and confidants had been neglected after the battle of Moncontour, and that Tavannes had retired from his command in disgust.* In regard to the conclusion of the treaty of peace, also, the monarch had slighted the exhortations of the Pope, and rejected the offers of the King of Spain.† The hand of Marguerite de Valois had been refused to the King of Portugal; and a marriage had been eagerly urged between the Duke of Alençon, the King's youngest brother, and the Protestant Queen of England. The circumstance, however, which probably tended more than any other, to convince the Admiral that the King had laid out for himself a new line of policy, was the proposal made by Charles, through Biron and Marshal Cossé, to give vigorous support to the Calvinists of the Low Countries, in the wars which were then raging between Philip II. and his Protestant subjects.‡ Skilfully assailing the weaknesses of the Admiral, as well as holding out those

* Memoires de Tavannes. † Castelnau.

‡ Aubigné and Sully agree in declaring that the first suggestion of an attempt to assist the Prince of Orange, was made by Charles, though Anquetil implies that the proposal came from the Protestants. In stating the causes, which induced Coligni to believe that Charles was sincere, I have not arranged them in their chronological order; and it may be well to remark, that the events to which I allude, were spread over a considerable period, namely, from the end of August 1570, to the beginning of September 1571.

inducements, which might touch the higher points of his character, the young King offered the command of the army, destined to co-operate with the Prince of Orange, to that great commander, and promised to give him the office of Viceroy in the ancient feofs of France, which Charles proposed to recover from the crown of Spain.

Notwithstanding all these alluring prospects, it was not without much hesitation and long consideration, that Coligni determined to present himself at court. Numerous deputations took place; and the conferences between the young King and Teligny, Count Louis of Nassau, and other Protestant leaders, all resulted in producing a conviction in the minds of the oppressed party, that a great change had been effected in the feelings of the monarch, while Cossé, of whose honor and sincerity there could be no doubt, protested to Coligni and the Queen of Navarre, that the eager desire of Charles, was, to free himself from the trammels in which his mother held him, to lessen the influence of the house of Guise, and to make use of the military genius and political wisdom of the Admiral, in maintaining the dignity of France, abroad and at home.

Thus assured by every external indication, Coligni yielded; and the court having advanced as far as Blois, he proceeded thither, accompanied by Marshal Cossé, and fifty armed gentlemen of his own party; a precaution which had been recommended to him by the King, to secure his person

against the effects of private enmity.* He was received with the utmost distinction; the Guises quitted the court before his arrival, and he was instantly admitted to the King's presence, where casting himself at the feet of the young monarch, he was raised by Charles himself, who embraced him, called him his father, and testified the greatest joy and satisfaction at seeing him in his proper place near the person of his sovereign.

"I have got you now," exclaimed the monarch, holding the veteran in his arms, "and do not think that you shall escape again easily."†

Riches, favors, honors, were showered upon him and his friends; and the houses of Montmorenci and Chatillon renewing their ancient close intimacy, seemed for a time all powerful at the court of France. The Queen-mother and the Duke of Anjou also displayed much satisfaction at the appearance of Coligni amongst them, and the young Duke of Alençon, though animated from his cradle with the most deadly and insane hatred of his brothers,‡ participated, probably with sincerity, in the joy they expressed.

No restraint was placed upon the proceedings of the Admiral: he was permitted to come and go between the court and his chateau at Chatillon; and the anxiety which was shewn by the King for his speedy return when absent, seemed no more than might be expected from the pleasure which Charles

* Auvigny. † Aubigné.

‡ Memoires de Nevers, tom. I.

appeared to take in his conversation, and the confidence which he expressed in his judgment.

" Not a day passed," says Aubigné, " without seeing favors gifts and offices, refused to the solicitations of all others, granted at the least word from him." The war against Spain, was a subject of constant consultation between Coligni and the King, and preparations were carried on, which must have caused serious uneasiness to Philip, if they were not satisfactorily explained by private communications from the French court.

It has been a question with many historians: it is a question still, whether the horrible crime which was so soon after perpetrated on St. Bartholomew's day, was premeditated from the conclusion of the third war; whether the caresses which were now showered upon the Protestant leaders, were but artifices to lure them to destruction; and whether, even if the Queen-mother and a few of those in whom she placed confidence, had already plotted the destruction of the Huguenot party, Charles IX. himself was a participator in their schemes of massacre. Each party has decided according to its own prejudices, and there is much to be said on both sides. But it would certainly seem, that the balance of evidence is against the court, and many facts combine to shew that Charles himself was cognizant of the intended crime.

The contemporary writers divide themselves into the two great bodies of Roman Catholics, and Protestants; participators in the deed, and those who

suffered in their families and friends. The testimony of both may be suspected of partiality; but the testimony of events is more sure, and the opinions of persons living at the time, but remote from the scene of action and free from the passions which moved the contending parties in France, may be received as very good collateral evidence.

In favor of the assertion, that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was not a long premeditated act, and that Charles did not take any part in the design, till within a few days of its execution, we have the memoirs of the Princess Marguerite, the relation given by the Duke of Anjou to his physician, Miron, and the memoirs of Tavannes written by his son.* The Princess Marguerite, however, as is justly observed by Gomberville, in his collection of the Papers of Nevers, "is not always the most faithful of historians;" and she herself shews that she was unacquainted with any of the facts of the conspiracy, till after it had produced its horrible fruit, and then only received her information regarding the preceding steps, from the murderers themselves. The memoirs of Tavannes, though, beyond doubt, his son had in his hands various papers left by his father, have evidently been subjected to great alterations, and therefore can scarcely be looked upon as a contemporary record. The relation of the Duke of Anjou to

* From the manner in which Anquetil frequently mentions these memoirs, it would seem that he was unaware that they were not the work of Tavannes himself.

Miron must be regarded as the confession of one of the principal murderers to a person whom he respected, but the circumstances under which it was made, deprive it of a great part of that authority which it otherwise might have obtained. The Duke, afterwards Henry III. was passing through Germany at the time he made this statement, on his way to receive the crown of Poland. He had found at the courts of the various German Princes, innumerable Protestant refugees; he had been met with coldness, and in some instances with horror, by the small Sovereigns of the confederation; and he knew that a general opinion existed both in Germany and Poland, that a crime which had excited one cry of indignant rage throughout the Empire, had been aggravated by long premeditation.* He was tormented by remorse, which would not suffer him to sleep; and we may well suspect that, in relating the particulars of an act he could not deny, he endeavored to represent them as favorably as possible, deceiving himself upon several points, and Miron upon others, in order to deprive the crime of some of those atrocious features, which were only suspected by the world in general, and to give an account, which, if repeated to his Polish subjects, or to his German allies, might mitigate the shame and disgrace that had followed the deed. We know

* This is proved by the letters of the ambassador Schomberg to Charles IX.

that Charles IX. most grossly falsified the truth in his statements, to his own people and to neighbouring monarchs; and there is no reason to suppose that the Duke, equally criminal, would not be equally insincere.

It is probable that M. de Cheverny, afterwards Chancellor of France, might have furnished us with a full account of the facts, as he was at this time one of the most intimate counsellors of the Duke of Anjou; but he studiously avoids entering into any of the details of the deed; and his very silence leads the mind to conjecture, that he was unwilling to dwell upon topics, so disgraceful to one who had been his greatest benefactor. Cheverny,* however, as well as the three other authorities we have cited, intimates that the massacre of St. Bartholomew was not premeditated.

But when we compare the account of Marguerite with that of Tavannes, and the relation of the physician Miron with both, we shall find that they contradict each other in various important particulars, while all but Marguerite, had a direct interest in diminishing the load of reprobation, by confirming the story generally told by the murderers, that the menaces and violence of the Protestants, had driven the King to an act repugnant to his feelings. It is also to be observed, that most of the Roman Catholic writers, who have since discussed the subject, have perverted the words of some authors, omitted many

* Memoires d'Estat, page 40.

passages of others, and cited some as favorable to their view of the case, who are most strongly opposed to their statements.*

In support of the assertion, that both Charles IX. and his mother, had, from the very conclusion of the war, meditated a general slaughter of the Huguenots, and only loaded them with distinction to draw them into the snare, we have a host of Protestant writers, the admission of a number of Roman Catholics, contemporary and nearly contemporary, and a multitude of facts corroborative of the suspicion. Aubigné and Sully make the accusation in direct terms; Davila, a Roman Catholic, whose father, brother, and two sisters, were at the court of France in the year 1572, and who was himself attached to Catherine de Medicis, seems to suppose, that not a doubt can exist of the fact; L'Etoile, in the memoir prefixed to the Journal of Henry III. asserts it boldly; and the good Bishop of Rodez uses the following

* Although the author of the famous "Dissertation sur la St. Barthelemi," is conspicuous in this course, his perversions are not quite equal to those of Anquetil, nor does he affect candor like the other. Anquetil cites Castelnau and Brantome, as writers, who declare that Charles did not consent to the massacre, till after the Admiral had been wounded. Now the Memoirs of Castelnau terminate previous to the period of which he speaks, and Brantome by no means intimates anything of the kind, but rather the reverse, as will be seen above. He also conceals the circumstances of the murder of Ligneroles, and says not one word of the cause of that act, as stated by Aubigné and Davila, though it had a remarkable bearing on the massacre.

words, which prove beyond all question, that after deep study of the subject, his mind was completely satisfied of that long premeditation, which gave even a darker shade to the blackest spot in the history of France.

"However," he says, "the King having discovered that he could not overcome the Huguenots by force, resolved to employ other means, more easy, but also far more wicked. He applied himself to caress them, to feign that he would treat them favorably, to grant them the greater part of the things they demanded, to lull them with the hope of making war upon the King of Spain in the Low Countries, which they passionately desired; and to lure them still better, he promised as a pledge of his good faith, to marry his sister Marguerite to the Prince of Navarre, so that by these means he drew the principal chiefs of that party to Paris."

The words of Brantome, though less strong, shew beyond doubt, that in his opinion the Duke of Anjou, at least, meditated the horrible act of treachery which was committed, even before the conclusion of the war. In speaking of the peace of St. Germain, he says, "Not that he (the Duke) desired it, otherwise, than inasmuch as he might prepare himself better for the festival of St. Bartholomew, and draw by this means, the Admiral to Blois and to Paris." He goes on to state, that others took a different view; but this he distinctly declares to be his own, in his eulogium on

Charles IX.* The letters of Schomberg to Charles, also prove that such was the firm conviction of all the German Princes at the time; and the Italian writers of that age uniformly announce and laud the art, with which the plot had been concealed till the moment of execution.

The testimony of facts, however, is still more powerful, and I shall now proceed to detail the occurrences which immediately preceded the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, having thought it best in the first place to inquire briefly into the question, whether the opinions of the least prejudiced and best informed contemporaries, should lead us to conclude that the bloody deed was or was not the result of a long concerted plot, in order that the reader, as he goes on, may form his own judgment of the causes of the actions, about to be related.

While the court was at Blois, took place one of those acts of private assassination, which were the disgrace of the age. Ligneroles, a young gentleman of considerable promise attached to the Duke of Anjou, was murdered during a hunting party, by Villequier, a cherished companion of the King, accompanied by Count Charles of Mansfeld and Henry of Angouleme, Grand Prior, a natural son of Henry II.† Had his assassination been com-

* See also Historia vitæ Caroli Valesii a Papyrio Massonio conscripta, from which Brantome apparently borrowed with a grasping hand.

† We shall soon have to speak more of this personage as one of the butchers of St. Bartholomew's day.

mitted by Villequier alone, the deed might have been ascribed to personal enmity; but when we find that the King's favorite was aided by the monarch's illegitimate brother and one of his principal officers, suspicion naturally turns towards a superior personage; and we inquire what was the motive for his death, and why were the murderers not only suffered to escape with impunity, but raised higher than ever in the confidence of their sovereign? Aubigné says, that people believed Ligneroles' assassination was commanded, "because in playing the good companion with the King, he had given Charles to understand, that he knew the secret of the proposed wedding at Paris;" and Davila enters into all the particulars, stating expressly, that the Duke of Anjou, having confided the scheme to his friend, Ligneroles had the imprudence to hint his knowledge to Charles, whereupon, the King ordered him to be murdered, without loss of time; a command which the Duke did not venture to oppose.*

Still Coligni remained deceived, and Charles pursued the same course of policy, overwhelming him

* The manner in which Anquetil endeavors to conceal this strong proof of Charles's premeditated treachery is curious. "Ligneroles," he says, "was killed at a hunting party by order of Charles, because he had the misfortune, they say, to learn from his master the secrets of the King. Others say, because he had an intrigue with the Queen-mother." But the author never hints what the secrets were, of which Ligneroles had been made the depositary.

with short-lived favors, the very excess of which should have been warning sufficient.

The monarch, indeed, could not always disguise his real purposes; but, sometimes pressed by the indignant remonstrances of the more zealous Catholics, sometimes yielding to a feeling of triumph in his own art, he on several occasions suffered words to escape him, which plainly indicated that his pretended reconciliation with the Admiral, only covered projects of revenge. In one instance, after having displayed towards Coligni the tenderness and respect of a son for a father, he demanded of his mother, "Have I not played my part well?"* "Very well, my son," replied Catherine, "but you must continue to do so to the end." An Italian writer has added another imprudent speech, made by Charles to the Papal legate, who had been directed to remonstrate against the favor shewn towards the Huguenots, and to break off, if possible, the marriage of Marguerite with the Prince of Navarre. "Would to God," said the King, "that I could tell your Eminence all. You will soon see, as well as the Pope, that nothing is so well calculated as this marriage, to secure the Catholic religion in France, and destroy its enemies."†

The Queen of Navarre, during her first visit to

* Sully. Brantome reports the same words, but places them at an after period, though still referring to the same deed. Eloge de Charles IX. See also Mathieu and l'Etoile.

† Stratagema di Carolo IX. contra li Ugonoti.

the court at Blois, was treated with raillery and contempt by Catherine de Medicis, and in her letters to her son, complains loudly of the want of courtesy she experienced, while she expresses strong disgust at the licence and debauchery of the court, and no small surprise at the coldness of Marguerite herself and her repugnance to any concession to the religious views of her future husband.

Many other signs of enmity caused apprehensions amongst the inferior leaders of the Protestants. The young Prince of Navarre, in visiting his government of Guienne, in the beginning of 1572, was badly received by the people. Bordeaux shut its gates against him; and Villars, who was at the head of the royal troops in that province, refused to withdraw, or to defer the command to Henry. Several of the King's officers, with considerable forces, prowled round the walls of Rochelle, and a formidable armament upon the seas, kept the port nearly in a state of blockade.*

To all remonstrances and warnings on the subject, Coligni replied, that the army collected, was destined for the war in the Low Countries, and that no step had been taken without his advice and consent. He assured his friends, that full confidence might be placed in the King; and he aided, by his exhortations, both to remove the difficulties which the Queen of Navarre, at first, threw in the way of her son's marriage with Marguerite de Valois, and to bring

* Sully. Davila. Aubigné.

her to Paris to prepare for that event. The most suspicious circumstance which attended the whole transaction, only blinded the eyes of the Protestant leaders still farther, and facilitated the catastrophe. The Cardinal of Lorraine, the implacable enemy of the house of Chatillon, the unceasing persecutor of the Huguenots, and the instigator of all the fraud and violence under which they had suffered, exerted himself to obtain a dispensation for the proposed marriage, and won the new Pope, Gregory XIII., to consent.

Notwithstanding all these events, Jeanne d'Albret, pressed by Coligni and the young King, and urged by her courtiers, who were eager to share in the pleasures and favors of the court of France, at length determined to set out for the capital, though many of her wisest counsellors presaged, that "if the wedding was celebrated in Paris, the liveries would be very crimson."* Preceding her son, who remained for some days in the provinces, she arrived in the metropolis on the 15th of May, 1572,† and took up her abode in the house of Guillard, bishop of Chartres, a prelate suspected of favoring the doctrines of Calvin. The marriage of her son with the sister of the French King was appointed to take place immediately, and such arrangements agreed upon, as to obviate the religious scruples of both parties regarding the ceremony. But in the midst of the prepara-

* Sully. † De Serres.

tions, Jeanne d'Albret was suddenly seized with fever, and died after an illness of nine days.

A report that she had been poisoned, instantly spread through the capital, and Charles IX., with every appearance of deep grief, ordered the body to be opened and examined, to ascertain if any thing could be discovered to justify the suspicion. An abscess was found, caused, it would appear, by an attack of pleurisy unskilfully treated, and the investigation was carried no farther. The Protestant writers of the time remark, that the head was not opened, and several of them assert, in distinct terms, that her death was occasioned by poison, communicated by a pair of perfumed gloves, manufactured by the infamous René Bianchi, a Florentine perfumer, living on the Pont St. Michel, who was generally supposed to be employed by Catherine de Medicis, in removing those opponents, against whom she did not choose to employ the dagger or the sword. I see no cause, however, to believe that the Queen of Navarre suffered under any such practices, nor have we any proof that poison can be administered in the manner stated. In her case, an apparent cause for her decease was found upon opening her body; the surgeons sought no farther; and it is not necessary that the historian should do so.*

* Aubigné and l'Etoile declare that she was poisoned; and other authors mention the rumor, some with doubt, others with condemnation. Compare de Thou, de Serres, Pierre Mathieu, and the Journal of the Bishop of Oleron, in Sauval, Antiquités de Paris, tome ii. p. 199.

At the period of his mother's death, the Prince of Bearn was travelling towards Paris,* unconscious of her illness, and the news of her death reached him at Chaunay in Poitou.† He immediately assumed the style of King of Navarre, and with deep grief for the loss he had sustained, proceeded to Paris, pausing for a short time, to be present at the wedding of his cousin, the Prince de Condé. He found the whole court in mourning, and every sign of regret displayed for the loss he had just suffered. The celebration of the projected marriage was delayed, that sorrow might have its course; and it is not improbable, that Henry, who was met with the utmost coldness by his future bride, was by no means disappointed at the postponement of the ceremony, while Marguerite, who submitted unwillingly to the policy of her family, rejoiced to escape, even for a short time, an union that she detested.‡

During the interval, the Protestant nobles continued to flock to Paris, in order to be present at the marriage of their young chief; and Charles continued to amuse the Admiral, with the project of a war with Philip II. At the moment of the death of

* Perefixe. † Victor Cayet.

‡ There can be no doubt that she was sincerely attached to the young Duke of Guise; who, after having been refused in his application for her hand, had hastily married Catherine of Cleves, sister of the young Princess de Condé. Some authors do not scruple to assert, that the Princess Marguerite had already carried her complaisance towards the Duke to a criminal length.

Jeanne d'Albret, Coligni was in Paris, but having quitted the capital shortly after, he was soon recalled by the King, who pressed him to send in his project against Spain, in writing. With this request the Admiral complied; but Charles took the pains to submit the scheme to Morvillier, one of his principal counsellors, who soon produced a counter memorial, which gave rise to fresh discussions, and occupied the time till the whole of the leading Protestants were assembled in the metropolis.

Coligni, indeed, was not permitted to take the rash step which cost him his life, without manifold remonstrances from his more prudent friends;* and even after his last return to Paris, one of his followers, named Langoiran, suddenly presented himself to take leave of him, saying, that he was immediately about to retire into the country. When asked by the Admiral, the cause of his unexpected departure, he replied, "I go, because they caress you too much, and I would rather save myself with fools, than perish with sages." The Duke of Montmorenci also retired to Chantilly, upon pretence of illness, and no persuasions could induce him to return to Paris.†

* A letter exists in the Memoirs of Coligni, said to have been written by Cardinal Pellevé, to the Cardinal of Lorraine, to have been intercepted, and sent to the Admiral. It exposes, in plain terms, the whole designs of the court; but I have many doubts of the authenticity of the paper; and if Coligni ever received it, and believed it to be genuine, he must have been a madman to neglect the warning.

† Sully. Aubigné.

If, however, warnings were given and suspicions entertained, on one side, every assurance was afforded by the other. The King, who had already effected an apparent reconciliation between the house of Guise and the Admiral, and had made himself the guarantee of the peaceable demeanor of the former, issued a proclamation, as soon as he found that Coligni was about to take up his abode openly in the capital, which seemed intended especially to insure his personal safety. Various measures were prescribed for the immediate settlement, by competent persons, of any disputes which might arise; all vagabonds and persons without any lawful calling, were ordered to quit Paris forthwith, and the dangerous practice of carrying fire-arms was strictly prohibited within the walls of Paris.

At length, the greater part of the difficulties raised by the court of Rome, having been removed, the day for the union of the young King of Navarre with Marguerite of Valois, was fixed. The espousals took place at the Louvre, on the 17th of August, and were followed by a grand supper, during the course of which, it was remarked that the King conversed with Coligni, and other Huguenot leaders, with every appearance of affection and esteem.* The bride was then conducted to the archiepiscopal palace, where she slept that night, and the next morning the marriage ceremony was performed, exactly according to the plan

* Aubigné.

which had been agreed upon with the Queen of Navarre. A scaffold had been raised before the great gate of the church of Notre Dame; and there, in the presence of all the court, and an immense multitude of citizens, Henry received the hand of the Princess, the nuptial oath being administered by the Cardinal de Bourbon, the uncle of the young King of Navarre.

We are informed, however, by Davila, that at this inauspicious ceremony, the Princess, when asked, whether she willingly took Henry of Bourbon for her husband, replied not a word. Her brother, Charles IX., however, put his hand upon her head, and bent it down, which was received as a sufficient mark of assent. After the vows had been thus imperfectly exchanged, Marguerite retired into the church, to participate in the mass; and, while her young husband, and the Protestant nobles who accompanied him, remained in the body of the church, or in the porch, service was performed in the choir.*

While walking in the cathedral, with Marshal D'Amville, Coligni remarked the ensigns taken from the Protestant army at Jarnac and Moncontour; and, full of his project of war against Spain, he pointed

* Le Grain. Decade de Henri le Grand, says, that the young King retired to hear a sermon, (*au prêche;*) but de Thou was present, and gave a different account. It is unnecessary to notice the errors that have been committed by Daniel and others, in their account of this ceremony.

to them, exclaiming, "Before long, men will pull them down, and put others in their place, more agreeable to behold."*

After the mass, the young King of Navarre advanced to receive his bride, and led her into the Archbishop's palace, where dinner had been prepared for the court. A magnificent supper followed in the evening; and night closed in with balls and pageants.

The next day, splendid entertainments were given at the Hotel d'Anjou, and at the Louvre; and, on Wednesday the 20th, a tournament, or rather a military spectacle somewhat resembling one of those ancient passes of arms, took place at the Hotel Bourbon. The ground was so laid out and decorated as to represent heaven and hell; and in the former appeared Charles IX., with his two brothers, as the challengers, while Henry of Navarre, and the principal Protestant noblemen, advanced to attack the royal party. According to previous arrangement, after various chivalrous feats, the Huguenot assailants were driven back, and carried by devils into the infernal regions, from which they were ultimately set free by Cupid.† If this

* De Thou. Aubigné. De Thou heard the words, which he reports.

† Aubigné. This author was present at most of the scenes which he describes; and was now of an age (twenty-two,) to observe and judge of what was passing around him. His satirical spirit has deprived his work of some of that reputation

pageant was allegorical, and it is scarcely possible to suppose that it was not, the execution of it did more honor to the good humor of the young King of Navarre, than to the good feeling of Charles IX.

Coligni was now most anxious to return to Chatillon; and his letters to his wife shew that he was in daily expectation of concluding all the arrangements for the war in Flanders, and of being permitted to quit the capital, the gaieties and licentiousness of which, neither suited his character, nor his high religious impressions. The marriage festivities prevented his obtaining, for three days, the audience which he hoped would be final; but on Friday, the 22nd of August, he was at length admitted to an interview with Charles. He then accompanied the young monarch to the racket-court, and there left him to pursue an amusement of which the King was passionately fond. From the Louvre the Admiral took his way on foot, towards the house in which he lodged, in Rue Betisy, attended by twelve or fifteen gentlemen, and having on one side, Monsieur de Guerchi, whom he had just reconciled with Thiange, and on the other, Monsieur Sorbieres. A letter or memorial was placed in his

which is justly its due; but in comparing his statements with those of Davila, a remarkable confirmation of each will be found in the writings of the other, especially as we know that they wrote without communication. Davila might indeed have seen the work of Aubigné; but it is well known, that the first books of his history were written long before the first volume of that of the Protestant writer appeared in 1616.

hands immediately after quitting the Palace; and he continued reading it, as he walked slowly along, till, in turning the corner of the Rue des Fossées, St. Germain, he was wounded by two balls from an arquebuse, fired from the window of a house, at the angle formed by that street, and the cloisters of St. Germain l'Auxerrois. One bullet entered his left arm, and the other broke the first finger of his right hand;* but, without appearing agitated or alarmed, he pointed out the house from which the gun had been discharged, and some of his attendants rushed forward, and broke open the door. No one was found within, but a man and woman-servant, with an arquebuse, lately fired, lying in the room which the assassin had just quitted; but the house was recognised as that of Peter de Villemar, formerly preceptor of the Duke of Guise, and now a canon of St. Germain.

On questioning the servants, it was afterwards discovered, that a person, calling himself Boland, had been brought to the house the day before, by Villiers de Chailli, maitre d'hotel to the King, and steward of the Duke of Guise.† He had slept there that night, during the absence of the canon; and a horse had been kept ready for him in the cloister, the entrance of which, nearest the Rue des Fossée St. Germain, was partially closed by an image of stone, so as to impede the Protestant gentlemen who hurried in to apprehend the murderer. He

* Vie de Coligni. † Auvigny.

thus effected his escape with ease to the Porte St. Antoine, where other horses, said to have been brought from the stable of the Duke of Guise, were in waiting. Farther inquiries shewed, almost beyond doubt, that the assassin was the infamous Maurevel,* who had treacherously slain the gallant Mouy, and after the death of that officer, had taken refuge with the Duke of Anjou, from whom it is said he received a pension for the deed.†

Messengers were immediately sent to inform the King of the crime which had been committed; and Charles, who was still playing at tennis, cast away his racket, with every appearance of furious indignation, exclaiming, "Shall I never be at peace?"‡

In the meantime, the surgeons of the court, the ministers of the Protestant church, and the various princes and nobles of the Admiral's party, as well as Cossé and D'Amville, hastened to the house of the wounded man. Amongst the first that arrived was the young King of Navarre, who was deeply touched by the situation of his friend. The demeanor of Coligni, however, was such as might be

* He is frequently called Maurevert, by the historians of the time, and sometimes Montravel.

† Auvigny.

‡ Whether he did or did not meditate the massacre of St. Bartholomew's day, there is no reason to suppose the anger of the King assumed; as in the former case the attempt to assassinate the Admiral was likely to frustrate his more rapacious schemes of butchery; and in the latter, it was a gross outrage upon his authority.

expected from his character, calm, firm, composed, and full of trust in God.

Accompanied by the Prince de Condé, Henry of Navarre proceeded from the bed-side of the Admiral to the Louvre, where, in bold and indignant terms, he represented to Charles, in the presence of his mother and the court, the atrocity of the act committed, called for justice upon the assassin and his instigators, and demanded permission to retire from Paris, alleging, that the lives of himself and his friends were no longer safe in the capital. Charles replied, by expressing even greater anger than his cousin; and with the blasphemies, common to his lips, declared, that he would inflict signal punishment upon all concerned in the horrible deed. The Queen-mother even went beyond her son, in displaying indignation and resentment. She exclaimed that no one could be considered secure after such an act; and that the King, her son, would some night be attacked in his bed. She likewise proposed immediate measures for preventing any one from quitting the metropolis who might be implicated in the crime. Chailli was sought for, but not found; the Duke of Guise, who, with a number of gentlemen attached to his house, had come to Paris not long before, retired from the Louvre, apparently under the suspicion of the court; and Charles himself, proceeded to visit the Admiral, who by this time had undergone several painful operations for the amputation of the finger, and the extraction of the bullet from his arm.

The Queen-mother, however, took precautions against any private conversation between her son and Coligni, accompanied the King herself to the chamber of the sick man, under the appearance of deep interest in his fate, together with the Duke of Anjou, and a number of those noblemen, who are admitted by all parties, to have been the chief actors in the tragedy which soon followed.

It is necessary to remark, in this place, that the apprehension which Catherine evidently entertained, lest any private communication between Charles and the Admiral, should prove disadvantageous to herself, is the strongest corroboration that exists, of the very feeble evidence adduced by some writers, to convince us that the young King was not privy to the designs which had been formed for the massacre of the Huguenots.

Whether this fact may be judged sufficient to overthrow the numerous proofs of premeditation on the part of Charles, or whether we may not reasonably conclude that the precautions of the Queen proceeded simply from a dread lest the remonstrances of Coligni, and his calm and moderate demeanor, under a terrible injury, should shake the young monarch's resolution, the reader may judge by the evidence set before him. But it is scarcely possible to conceive, that Charles should display sincere and heartfelt commiseration for the Admiral, reverence for his character, and furious indignation against his enemies; and within the short space of eight

and forty hours, should order the most fearful breach of all his own engagements, the massacre of all his Protestant subjects, the murder of Coligni, and the destruction of some of his own most intimate friends, without the slightest proof of any crime on their part, or any inquiry whether the accusations of their enemies were true or false. Such must have been the case, however, if the statement of the Duke of Anjou to Miron was accurate; but it must never be forgotten, that the Duke, his sister Marguerite, and the memoirs of Tavannes, contradict each other in some of the most essential points.*

The marked anger of the young King, the instant search for the murderer, the visit of the court to

* In the first place Marguerite says, that the Mareschal de Retz was the person employed to bring over Charles to the plan for massacreing the Huguenots. The Duke of Anjou, on the contrary, declares that de Retz strongly and nobly opposed any breach of faith towards them. The Duke asserts, that the King on being gained to consent to the death of the Admiral, declared that, such being the case, he would have all the Huguenots slaughtered throughout the realm, that none might be left to reproach him. The memoirs of Tavannes state that it was only determined to put the chiefs of the party to death, and that it was the fury of the people which rendered the massacre indiscriminate. A thousand discrepancies of the same kind may be pointed out; and the very fact of the introduction of the regiment of guards into the city, the gathering all the Protestants together into one quarter, the placing a guard at the house of Coligni, composed of zealous Papists and led by a creature of the house of Guise, all of which was done by order of the King, leaves his full participation, from a very early period, in the schemes of his mother, little doubtful.

Coligni, and many minor indications of good will towards the Protestant party, though now generally admitted to have been the effect of the most consummate duplicity, calmed in some degree the fears of the young King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé; and they abandoned their intention of quitting Paris. Others, more prudent, however, proposed to retire in a body from the capital, carrying the Admiral with them; but this suggestion was overruled, and Coligni himself expressed the utmost confidence in the King, though he clearly pointed out the Duke of Guise as the person who had instigated the attempt to assassinate him. The King and the Queen-mother affected to participate in his opinion, on that point; and when the Princes of Lorraine presented themselves to take leave of the court, affecting to be indignant at the suspicions entertained against them, the reply of Charles was harsh and severe, his countenance angry and stern.

The Duke of Guise, and his relations, however, did not quit Paris; and some movements having taken place amongst the people, in favor of the family who appeared to be in disgrace, Charles affected to apprehend a tumult, set a guard over the house of Coligni, on pretence of anxiety for his safety,* gathered all the Protestant nobility into the same quarter of the town in which the Admiral was lodged, alleging that they could there defend

* Coligni, having heard of the agitation in the city, demanded a guard of half a dozen men: the King insisted upon sending fifty.

themselves better in case of any outrage from the partizans of Lorraine, and begged his young brother-in-law, Henry of Navarre, to call around him in the Louvre, as many of his most determined friends as he could collect. The guard placed over the house of Coligni, however, was commanded by Cosseins, one of his marked enemies; arms were brought into the royal residence; and a large body of arquebusiers were distributed amongst the streets in the neighbourhood of the palace, and along the banks of the Seine, while measures were taken to prevent any defensive weapons from being carried to the quarter where the Protestants were now assembled.*

Still, although with Coligni, the young King of Navarre, and others, the appearance, at least, of entire trust in the good faith of the King was maintained, a number of Huguenot gentlemen, having less confidence, withdrew from the dangerous position in which they were placed after the attempt upon the Admiral, and either retired into the country, or to the Faubourg St. Germain.† But every hour, Coligni, and his son-in-law Teligni, received intelligence, which they communicated to those around, that the King was zealously engaged in taking precautions against any interruption of the public peace, and was displaying more and more strongly, his determination to punish those who had any share in the attempted assassination.

* Aubingé, Auvigny, Peirre Mathieu.

† Memoires de Sully.

There remains no doubt in the mind of any one, that Charles had, by this time, determined upon the massacre; and Anquetil says, after having fixed the period at which, in his opinion, the King decided upon the butchery, "from that moment, Charles lent himself to all the deceits which they shewed him were necessary to success." The question naturally arises, If he could at this time display such consummate art, why should we doubt that he could and did use the same disguise before?*

During the afternoon of Saturday the 23d of August, the young King of Navarre brought his bride to visit his wounded friend; and though Marguerite soon returned to the Louvre, Henry remained with Coligni till night-fall, when he rejoined the party at the palace, little imagining that during his absence the question had been discussed in the council, whether he himself should be included in the approaching massacre of his fellow Protestants. It was determined, however, in the secret council, that his life and that of the Prince de Condé should be spared; but immediate steps were taken for carrying into execution the sanguinary designs of the court against all the other Calvinists in the capital.

* The description of Charles by Papyrius Masso, fully bears out the statement of Davila, that he was full of fraud. The former historian says he was "cum vellet egregius dissimulator," and he adds, "jusjurandum et perjurium sermonis genus non criminis putans; idcirco fidem violabat quoties ex usu videbatur."

The conduct of the whole enterprise was left to the young Duke of Guise, of whose talents, courage, and ruthless determination, there could be no doubt; but as it was necessary that no time should be afforded the Protestants, to recover from their first surprise, and to rally their forces for resistance, the aid of the inhabitants of Paris was called in. John Charron and Marcel, the actual and late Prevôts des Marchands, were sent for by the King,* and ordered to arm the Roman Catholic citizens, and to have them assembled at midnight in front of the Hotel de Ville. Each man was commanded to wear a white cross in his hat, and a white linen cloth round his left arm, in order that the butchers might recognise each other; and in the end Charron and Marcel were informed, that at the sounding of the tocsin, just before day, by the great bell at the Palace of Justice, a general massacre of the Huguenots was to be commenced, by the soldiers. The citizens were ordered to take part therein; no one was to be spared on any consideration; and the two officers were assured, that similar acts of barbarity were to be performed at the same moment throughout all the provinces of France.† The first effect of such a communication on the minds of Charron and Marcel, was to produce horror, which they could not conceal. They trembled, we are told, and hesitated to obey; but the menaces of Tavannes, and the furious countenance of the King

* Memoires de Tavannes. † Aubigné.

soon overcame their reluctance; and they promised to perform the task as ruthlessly as the monarch could desire: an engagement which they kept but too well.

With the most consummate hypocrisy, Charles kept up the appearance of friendship for the Protestants to the last, so that several Huguenot noblemen remained with him to a late hour on the night of the twenty-third. It would seem, that private regard induced him to make an effort to save the life of La Rochefoucault; and he pressed him to sleep at the Louvre. But the Count unconscious of danger, and thinking that the King wished to play off, at his expense, some of those practical jokes which continually disgraced the court, and often deviated into the grossest debauchery, would not remain at the Palace, but retired, never to return.* He was murdered the same night, by Chicot, who enacted on ordinary occasions the part of court fool, but who now took an active part in the massacre.

If the memoirs of Marguerite are deserving of any credit, and on the point about to be stated there is no cause to suppose she disguised the truth, Henry of Navarre was far from entertaining the same feelings of confidence displayed by La Rochefoucault; and it is probable, that many circumstances after his return to the Louvre, shewed him, there was danger in the air he breathed. The

* Brantome.

Duchess of Lorraine, the eldest sister of the young Queen of Navarre, was by this time aware of the designs of her mother, and, at the hour of retiring to rest on the 23rd, would fain have prevented Marguerite from returning to her husband's apartments, thinking that the Protestants might take vengeance upon her, for the outrage about to be committed. But Catherine de Medicis sternly reproved the Duchess for her imprudence, and commanded the Queen of Navarre to withdraw, which she did, wondering what could be the cause of her sister's tears and anxiety. She found her husband's bed surrounded by thirty or forty Huguenots whom she did not yet know, and instead of seeking repose, the whole party passed the night in conversing over the attempt upon the life of the Admiral.*

In the meantime, throughout the capital, hurried preparations were going on for the barbarous act about to be perpetrated, and the agitation of meditated crime reigned in the royal dwelling. The citizens, called to assemble at midnight, ranged themselves before the Hotel de Ville; armed men were seen hurrying hither and thither through the streets;† and the Dukes of Montpensier and Nevers, with part of the regiment of guards, and a number of Roman Catholic gentlemen, remained near the person of Charles IX, or in the court of the

* Memoires de la reine Marguerite. † Aubigné.

Louvre.* Catherine de Medicis, the Duke of Anjou, and the King himself, with gloomy expectation, waited in the halls of the palace, for the approach of the appointed hour; till, unable to bear any longer the horrible suspense, the Queen-mother urged the young monarch to anticipate the time named, and, obtaining his consent, sent off to the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, to order the tocsin to be sounded there, instead of at the Palais de Justice, which was too far off.

The party of Royal butchers then proceeded to a window, whence they could see what was taking place in the streets, and while there, the Duke of Anjou informs us, the report of a pistol was suddenly heard. Aubigné explains the fact, by stating, that at the noise, which by this time disturbed the silence of the streets, the Huguenots became alarmed, and one of them, unsatisfied with the answers he received, attempted to go out to see what was the cause, when he was wounded by a soldier. The sound froze the blood of the great criminals; a late remorse took possession of them, and if Henry III. is to be credited, an order was sent off to suspend the execution.†

But by this time the tocsin was ringing, the windows of the Papists, according to previous arrangement, were illuminated with lanterns and flambeaux; and the Duke of Guise, animated by the thoughts of his father's death, and the thirst for vengeance

* Davila. † Pierre Mathieu.

against his supposed murderers, was before the house of the Admiral. The slaughter of Coligni had been specially entrusted to him, and, accompanied by the Grand Prior and the Duke of Aumale, with a large party of soldiers he had hastened to the Rue de Betizy, as soon as permission to commence the massacre was granted. He found Cosseins and the guard before the house, with matches lighted, and prepared to begin the work of death.* The gates of the court were opened at the command of Cosseins; but his purpose being soon discovered, the door of the hotel was defended by those within, and one of the Swiss guard of the King of Navarre, who had been left with six others to protect the Admiral, was killed at his post in attempting to do his duty.† Six of the attendants of the Duke of Guise, amongst whom were Besme, a German, and Petrucci, an Italian, rushed up the stairs, and soon made their way to the chamber of Coligni, while the Duke and his friends remained below in the court.

After an ineffectual attempt at resistance, Cornaton and other attached attendants of the Admiral, fled to his room, where they found him at prayers, and perfectly prepared for the fate that awaited him. On learning that the door was forced, Coligni commanded all present to leave him, and provide, if possible, for their own safety. Three escaped, but the rest were picked off by the arque-

* Davila.

† Aubigné. Other writers say, that all seven were slaughtered.

busiers, as they attempted to fly over the roofs of the neighbouring houses.

The first of the assassins who entered the chamber of the wounded man, was the German Besme, who had been page to the Duke of Guise, and, advancing upon Coligni, he held his sword to the victim's breast, demanding, "Art thou the Admiral?" "I am," replied Coligni, with perfect calmness: "Young man, thou shouldst respect my grey hairs—nevertheless, thou canst abridge my life but little."* At those words, Besme plunged his sword into the Admiral's bosom, and then aimed a blow at his head,† while the rest despatched him with repeated wounds.

The Duke of Guise, eager to hear that the enemy of his house was no more, called from the court below, to inquire if the deed were done; and on Besme replying that the Admiral was slain, the Duke ordered him to throw the body down from

* Such are the words generally attributed to Coligni, on the authority of Atain, or Attin, one of the murderers. Aubigné says, that the Admiral added, "If I could but die by the hand of a gentleman, and not that of this knave."

† Besme was recompensed by the hand of a natural daughter of the Cardinal of Lorraine; and afterwards, on returning from Spain, where he had made a merit of the murder in the eyes of the court of Philip, he was taken by the Protestants; made his escape from Bouteville, where he was confined; was pursued by the Governor Bertanville alone, and, after discharging a pistol at him, but missing his aim, was run through the body and killed, in 1575.

the window; adding, "Monsieur d'Angouleme, will not believe it till he sees him." The unhappy Coligni, dead or dying, was then raised by Besme and Sarlabous and cast down into the court below, where the Duke of Guise wiped his bloody face with a handkerchief that he might see the features. Then, as he recognized the man he hated, he spurned the corpse with his foot, little dreaming that, ere many years had passed, the cruel and deceitful Prince, who, more than any other, had urged the horrible deed he had just committed, would treat his own dead body with the same indignity.

Leaving the house of the Admiral, Guise hurried on to new acts of butchery; exclaiming to the soldiers who followed him, "Courage, comrades, we have begun well! On to the others! The King commands it!" By this time, the tiger spirit of a Parisian mob was let loose; the streets were filled with armed multitudes eager for blood; the marked houses of the Protestants were broken open; the unhappy inhabitants starting from their beds at the sound of the demon-like shouts, which were rising round them, were murdered without resistance; neither age nor sex was spared; the unoffending child, the defenceless woman, and the impotent old man were slaughtered without mercy; virtue, and learning, and wisdom, proved no safeguard, and all the fierce passions of our depraved nature, unchained in the horrible anarchy, sated themselves

with crimes too fearful to be told. Catholics murdered Catholics, the heir slew the long-lived possessor, the adulterer despatched the husband of his paramour, the enemy murdered his foe in his bed; and all who did not bear the mark of Popery, were slaughtered without question; while the chiefs of this dreadful conspiracy ran through the streets, at the head of their armed followers, exclaiming, "Kill! kill!"

"More blood! more blood!" cried Tavannes; "bleeding is as good in summer as in spring." Horrible jests were thus mingled with the shouts and cries of the murderers, and the groans and screams of their victims; and still the bells of the churches tolled aloud, proclaiming, in the infernal spirit of persecution, "More blood! more blood!" From the windows, from the doors, were cast forth the corpses of the murdered Protestants, and the gutters of Paris, in the month of August, literally flowed with the blood of many of the noblest and most virtuous men in France.

It is needless to dwell upon the deeds of dark and beastly cruelty, performed by the inferior actors in this fearful tragedy, when the conduct of the great criminals who devised and executed it, may well serve to shew what spirit animated the Popish population of the capital.

At the sound of the first shot fired, we are told,*

* Discours du Roi Henri III. à un personnage d'honneur. Memoires de Villeray. Pierre Mathieu.

Charles IX., who had before been wavering and mournful, felt a sudden horror, or perhaps dread, and commanded the execution to be suspended; but no sooner did he find that this counter-order was too late, and beheld from the window, at which he had stationed himself, the butchery actually in progress, than the fierce and sanguinary spirit of the monster, whose delight, as a mere boy, was to slaughter inoffensive beasts of burden,* broke forth in all its fury. He seized a long arquebuse, which he was accustomed to use in the chase, and whenever he saw an unfortunate Huguenot flying before his pursuers, he fired at him,† exclaiming, "Kill! kill!" Under his own eyes, in the court of the Louvre, a multitude of those who had come to his royal palace, trusting to the faith of the King, and upon his own invitation, were slaughtered in cold blood by his guards. The very halls and corridors of his dwelling were polluted by the same treacherous acts; and the chamber of his sister was not exempt.

Henry of Navarre, after a sleepless night, had risen before daybreak, and left his young wife in bed, who, wearied with her own fears and the long, agitated conversation which had taken place between her husband and his friends, ordered the door to be fastened, and fell asleep. Scarcely were her eyes closed, however, when she was roused by

* Sæpè ob vios assinos decollavit, soluto domino pretio, spectantibus aulicis. Porcos mactavit, &c. Papyrius Masso.

† Brantome.

some one knocking violently, and crying, "Navarre! Navarre!" and starting up, she bade an attendant open the door, which was no sooner done, than Monsieur de Leyran, one of her husband's attendants, rushed in, covered with blood, wounded in in two places, and pursued by four soldiers of her brother's guard. The unfortunate Protestant clung to her for protection, but would have found no safety there, had not the captain of the guard entered at the moment, and spared him at the entreaty of the Princess. Terrified and bewildered, Marguerite fled to the apartments of her elder sister, the Duchess of Lorraine; but as she went, another Huguenot gentleman, named Bourse, was struck down dead at her feet.* The lives of two others were afterwards saved at her intercession; but Ambrose Paré, the King's surgeon, and his nurse, were the only Huguenots whom Charles consented to spare, without exacting from them the abjuration of their religion.

The young King of Navarre and the Prince de Condé were brought, unarmed, before the bloody monarch, and witnessed, as they passed, the massacre of a number of their most faithful adherents. Charles received them with fury on his countenance, and blasphemies on his lips, and commanded them, with horrible imprecations, to abjure the Protestant faith,† adding, "Death or the Mass."

Henry of Navarre replied briefly, by beseeching

* Memoires de la Reine Marguerite. † Sully. Péréfixe.

him to give them, at least, life and liberty of conscience; but Condé answered more at large, refusing boldly to sacrifice his religious feelings, even for security.* It was a moment of great peril to both, for the taste of blood had only increased the King's desire for more; and, although it had been determined in the council, that the lives of the two young Princes should not be taken, a great probability existed that Charles, carried away by the furious excitement of the moment, would order their instant destruction. He gave them three days to consider, however; swearing, that if, at the end of that time, they did not yield to his commands, he would cause them to be strangled. They were then removed under a guard, and Charles pursued the terrible career in which he had engaged.

During the whole of that horrible day the carnage continued, and was resumed on the Monday following: a third morning opened in the same manner; but orders were soon after given to suspend the massacre; and the slaughter in the capital gradually ceased.

* Aubigné.

END OF VOL. I.

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